# SELF NARRATIVES OF THE MARGINALISED

## (With Special Reference to Nomadic Tribes)

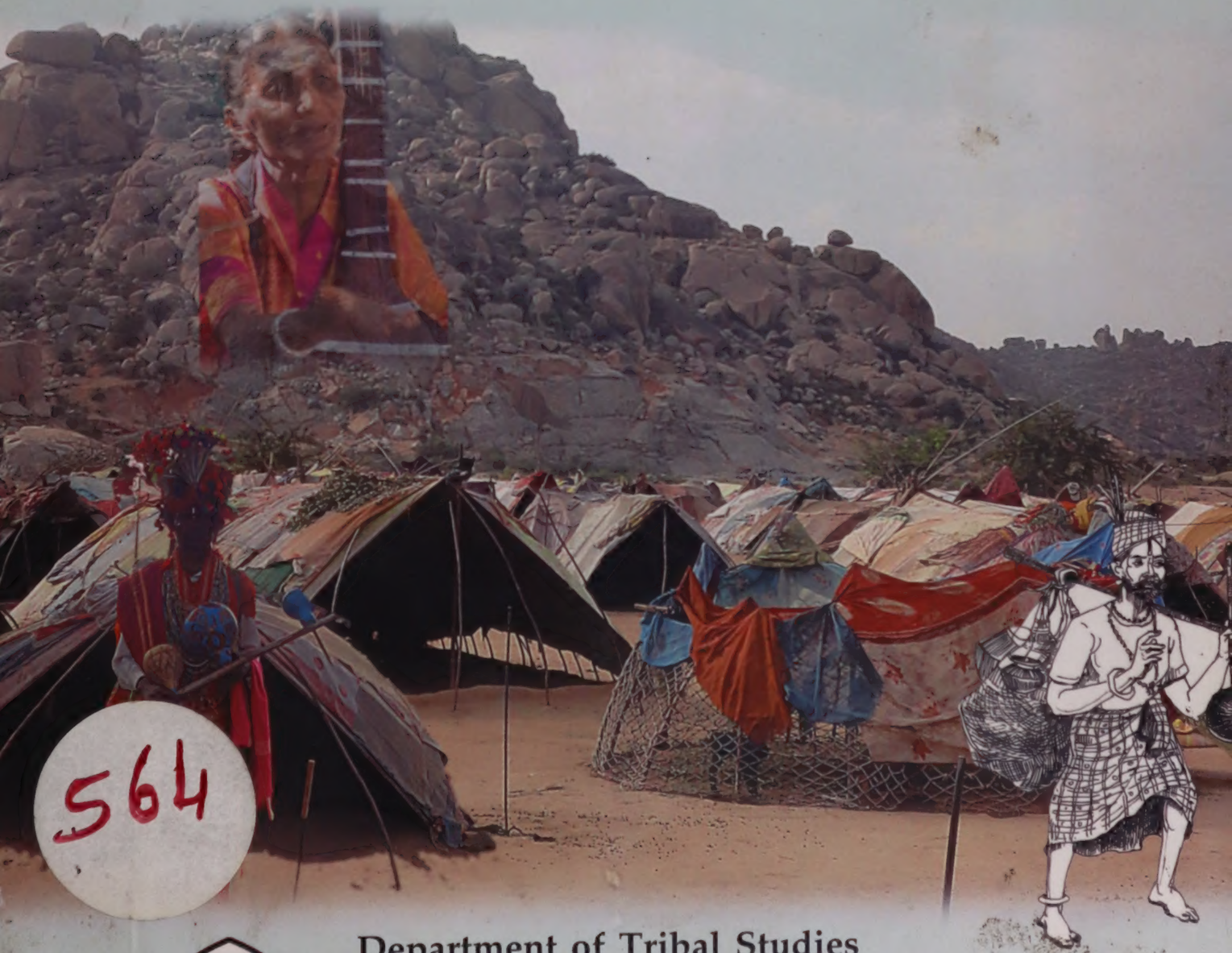
Thesis submitted for the Ph.D. Degree from Kannada University, Hampi


*Research Scholar*

**Balagurumurthy**

*Guide*

**Dr. A.S. Prabhakara**

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# DECLARATION

*I, Balagurumurthy do here by declare that this Ph.D. Thesis entitled* ***'Self Narratives of the Marginalised, (with Special Reference to Nomadic Tribes)'*** *has been originally carried out by me under the guidence and supervision of Dr. A.S. Prabhakar, Associate professor, dept of Tribal Studies, Kannada University, Hampi. This thesis or part thereof has not been submitted for any purpose to any other University.*

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# CERTIFICATE

*This is to Certify that this thesis entitled* ***'Self Narratives of the Marginalised, (with Special Reference to Nomadic Tribes)'*** *Submitted by Balagurumurthy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) is a Result of bonafide research carried out by him under my guidence and supervision.*

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# OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY. NATURE, METHODOLOGY, SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE

## Chapter 1

# OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY. NATURE, METHODOLOGY, SCOPE, IMPORTANCE

### Instroduction

There are various caste communities in the Hierarchical system of India. Maintaining this system through the ages with bewildered rule and helpless subjugation has been perpetuated over the years. Majority of the working class sections have been heinouslyincluded in this caste hierarchy. Though on the onset it may seem as a social and cultural factor deceiving the majority of working class, behind this intentional deceiving, definitely the upper caste systematically has decisive control over the productivity of the working class. This Country has been evading the very basic economic independency which is consolidately expressed in human behavior has been curtailed. The Majority populace of working class have been lagging centuries behind in the economical front for which inequality is the root cause. Though the castes have been divided on the basis of occupation, still the ruling class has always reaped the finest harvest of the working class. But the uneven social system that emerged based on the division of occupation is perpetually worrying the working class communities. Added to this, the majority of the working class without having any options ofneither the production nor self esteem has livedin helpless situation throughout the history.

Construction of a History of any Country reflects in the production forces or the powers of that Country. The Society, Culture and unities of a Country is possible only with the working forces. But, in the annals of history of India, the wars, confrontations the working class communities

have sacrificed and have been burdened as foundation stones of cultural mansion with an aspiration to become self reliant. The Country claiming to have thousands of years of history and cultural heritage, were created by the communities that are still struggling to have one square meal a day even in the present. The reason for this is that the ruling class controlling the production and the economy, thus consciously perpetuating the caste system. Preservation of Caste system means the ruling class decisively holding complete control over the production sector. Thus there are many communities in India who live in complete suppression and disappear without any power either socially or economically throughout their life time. Since thousands of years the ruling class behaving like ultimate masters of socio and cultural front has retained their ruling and distributing dreams. When man is aiming the sky to find out whether there is life in other planets in our solar system, just for a meal, the voiceless communities of India have become sweat on the streets and depend on the lowest occupation of our heritage.

These communities do not have that much of confidence where they can change their profession in the present. "The occupational division or recruitment based on the caste system is definitely disastrous. Industry is not stagnant, sudden and vital changes are continuous in it. While these changes are taking place, the individual too should have the freedom to change his or her occupation which is essential. If there is no freedom to chose or change occupation in accordance with the changes, then there is no life. There is no such freedom in the present caste system of the country. The Hindu cannot include new occupations to his caste and end up in starvation, which again the caste system is the root cause" says Dr. Ambedkar. Which means the perpetuation of caste system is ultimatelya systematic economical cheating. If one wants to erode the self identity or esteem of social and economical sphere of a community, first and foremost is to destroy their economical independency. The caste system in India has consciously been perpetuated over the centuries. Because of this, compared to other inequalities and exploitations across the globe, the exploitation and negative forms of Indian socio economical system is the cruelest of all.

The present globalisation has paved the way for all the communities across the world and is moving forward towards the economical independency thus enhancing their self esteem. Man is creating wonders that even god is astonished with these achievements. The communities are fast in availing the employment generated in the industrial sector. The fossils of heritage of the communities are fading away. Man is creating wonders day in and day out. The various forms of luxuries in life are covering faster. But in India the paradoxical age old Society is still alive. On one side there is the corporate world which is having gala time of lifeand contrarily on the side, there are tribal communities still existing in the caves and living on roots and tubers. This is a most unnatural and inhuman development of a Country. This is evidential only in aconventional Country like India.

Even to this day, the labour class in India does not have economical Independence. Downtrodden communities are forced to stick to their traditional occupations. Particularly, the nomadic and semi nomadic communities are depending on their traditional economical system and still cannot come out of their age old occupations. The nomadic communities have been undergoing the suppression and torture for a long period without any possibilities of raising their voice. Following the orders of their master with utmost humbleness and for their present situation believed that it is their fate. But the suppression and torture have sprouted a new inner consciousness among the working class communities. While facing the harsh realities of the present, these communities developed awareness to react to the situation. Wherever the words could not be expressed, silence rose in their memories. The pressure of these silences made the working class to be creative. While tolerating the suppression and torture, these communities registered their protests through words. This verbal expression expanded itself in numerous forms and designs. The silence thus became the pain of the heart, tears, words and songs expressed at various levels. The neglected working class communities could not protest but registered its existenance from time to time through the imposition of self hatredness. This self hatredness thus took shape through words, songs, stories and great legends. Juxtaposing their day to day life of the neglected communities which itself created a world of awareness. Among these neglected

communities, the nomadic tribes came with an uniqueness in their expression. This has been expressed in various forms.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.

### Eloquence or Rhetoric of Nomads: Worldly contemplation

This study tries to understand these legends and also their magnanimity in a consolidated way. The primal communities of the World have culminated these eloquences through their inner creativeness. The culminated eloquences have transformed through the generations and have ripened in the process. Before the scripture for the words, the interrelated relationship with work is the nucleus of their creativeness. In other words verbal expression is the Worldly awareness of these communities. The life around themselves which gives experience and creative thinking is the base for their verbal expression. For this reason the primal communities and working classes imbibe the expressions of the mainstream for their developmental modules. Therefore, we have to consider that the study of social history of these communities is nothing but the natural social history of them. Although at a glance, it may appear as unnatural stories or events, the original epics of these societies depends on the thought process of each community.

The original epics are the unique epics that depict origin of earth, origin of water, origin of nature, love between man and women and the possibilities of human race. While reading the original epics it seems romantic. It appears as the words of super humans. But there are feeling of dejection and the rebellion nature of super human are reflected in this romanticism. Although it appears that the search is for powers of super humans, but it simultaneously says the mutual relationship with nature. The same has been told by Sri Mogalli Ganesh" The nature is the abundant energy of the folklore tradition. The continuous conversation with nature has enlarged their creative expression. The total articulation of folk language reflects the nature and always follows this process. The creativeness is embodied in relationship with culture and nature. Hence, the oral tradition thus transforms the culture as human form. The physical belief of these communities about the origin of earth and organisms are the fruits of nature. This physical stand of these communities shapes their understanding. There is no room for romantic beliefs of super human powers.

Women are the supreme characters in the original epics of the nomads. Women have the superior place in the eloquence of these communities. The physical belief of these communities is the mirror of their understanding that after the evolution of the earth, mating of man and woman is the reason for the propagation of human race. Along with this, a feeling of a journey of dejectionis portrayed dominantly in these epics. The cultural heroes of these epics start the journey with a curse. Those who are the target of vivid curse from the deities are the Cultural heroes of these epics. Yes, it is also true that these cultural heroes are the primal persons of that race. These cultural heroes are cursed for no mistake of them and innocent behavior. Among the 'Helava' community, the primal person of his innocent faith is cursed and comes down to the earth and becomes the primal person for the emergence of 'Helava' community.The cursed heroes become the reason for the origin of nomadic communities and their economic structure. These nomadic communities attribute the original epics and mythological reasons for their present conditions. These communities express with self hatredness that the mistakes committed in the past are the reason for their nomadic life style. Because of this, the original epics reflect the present life of these communities and along with this it is strongly expressed the feeling dejection among themselves. Hence, epics of these nomads express a journey of self hatredness, dejection and curse.

These epics also have a face of opposition. Those who call themselves as a cursed community, through their innocent social behavior, they bend the feudal powers. The helplessness and innocence considered as their weakness, itself becomes the weapon in defending the community against the enemies of their class. Here the deficiency becomes the strength. The weakness is the humbleness. The curse of super self esteem and helplessnessis the boon. The nomads become tolerable in the present for their creative energy at the enactment level. Within the intense weakness they exhibit an unmatchable skill which is amazing. For this reason only, the land they stand is ultimatein the narratives of nomads. Their day to day struggle is their driving force. The narratives of the nomads sarcastically question and condemn the hierarchical structure around their life and the inequality of classes. The Kamboji kingwho is exemplified with his princely

status was dethroned and made to cultivate plants for the fulfillment of his life.The narrative of nomads establishes that those who look down on the feudal class Society and nature would be made to bow down. In order to condemn the male chauvinism of Kumararama in Kumararama epic, Ratnaji Eeramma is re borne as the daughter of Sultan of Delhi. The male dominated society that perpetuates its established values which makes Ratnaji as immoral character, to question the same values and to protest, Ratnaji is born again and again. This highlights the conflict of Kumararama's feudalistic values against Ratnaji's natural life values. The intense energy of questioning the established power structure and revolting against that has been perpetually alive in these narratives. This class consciousness of the nomads provides a view of their social status. Therefore, the eloquence of nomads considered as romantic has been neglecting their social views or strata. Readymade models and European approaches becomes a hurdle in understanding these social views. Through the native research approaches which are in front of us would help us in analysing the eloquent magna opus of the nomads.

The written stories of nomadic communities are written as part of the collective consciousness. These are quite contrary to the biographical writing approaches of the mainstream society. The biographies would lose itself from the writers self ego. When everything is constructed from the individual point of view forgetting that the individual is part of a system and born in a community, then the writing becomes artificial and dishonest. Lies emerge many a time while writing. In the course of time, an individual is born from the history. His utmost private details too are born from the collective sensitivity. The written biopic of nomads goes beyond this extent. It reminds of Maxim Gorky's 'my universities', 'my childhood' and 'amidst people'. Gorky never considers that he lived by himself anywhere. He has reflected in his biopic his collective experiences, the society he had seen. Hence, the Gorky's biopic establishes the history of his contemporary society. Because of non individualistic character of Gorky's biopic creates a new model. The narratives of nomads have naturally imbibed these qualities. In an overall confrontation of life, an individual searching self and his love and tragedies documenting into the history are found in the narratives of the nomads.

While reading many biographies from this point of view, establishes the history of many communities. The honest documentation of self has insights and expressed artistically that get the literary importance. For this primary reason the biographies have been considered as one of the serious forms of literature. In this background the many of nomadic Dalit autobiographies in Marathi like Laxman Gaikwad's 'Uchalya', Daya pawar's 'Baloothe', Sona kamble's 'aatavanichipakshi', Laxman mane's 'upar' opens the nomadic world. Also reading biographies of Siddalingaiah's 'Ooru keri', Malagathi's 'Government Brahmana', K. Chennabasava gowda's 'Naanobba Sarvajanika', Yellappa Reddy's 'Hasiru Haadi', Ko. Chennabasappa's 'Nanna manassu Nanna nambuge', Gopalakrishna Adiga's ' Nenapina Ganiyinda', Yenagi Balappa's ' Nanna Bannada Baduku', R.C. Hiremath's 'Uri barali Siri barali', Lankesh's 'Huli Maavina mara' along with biographies from other language simultaneously opened new dimensions like literature, Education, Society, Politics, Economy and psychology etc. Kuvempu's autobiography 'Nenapina Doniyalli' makes a common man virtually to become a saintly person. In the backdrop of reading the above said books, Ambedkar's life and his writings which reject the classical forms of references, but showcasing the literature of exploited class and verifying it as the history of communities is the primary concern and objective of this study.

In this context, without any preoccupied notion to look at the Dalit and nomads differently, are seen as part of exploited sectionfrom the point of view of Dalit identity. Marathi autobiographies have retained this uniqueness. Along with this, the first autobiography of nomads in Kannada which was published in a news paper called ' bayala benneri', Kuppe Nagaraj's ' Alemariya Antharanga', A.M. Madari's 'Gondaligya' and Dr. A.S.Prabhakar himself being a nomad 'Dombaru - ondu adhyana' too being nomadic worlds conscious rationale autobiographies becomes face to face with the superficial level hierarchy. The aim is to include all these life stories of nomadic groups for the study.

This study is a study of neglected nomadic groups. This is an effort to study the available stories, poetry, narratives and autobiographies of local and worldwide nomads and tribes. The western anthropological

studies look at the nomads and tribal communities from a global perspective. These studies grasp the nomads and tribes in totality. While grasping in this way, the nomads and tribes of Europe and The nomads and tribes of India finds a commonality. The nomads and tribes in Europe might be still in the forest retaining their traditional economic sources on which they are dependent. And also they might have the freedom to make their economic sphere as an industry. Or they can give up their traditional economic activities and get involvedin new production activities. But the nomads and tribes in India do not have these choices. The nomads and tribes here are cursed by birth. The nomads and tribes of India are fossils of traditional society. They are not economically independent. They are creation of feudal system of this Country. With all these reasons there is a difference between the nomads and tribes of the world and of India. But it is evident among the nomads there are certain similarities in their oral tradition.

Who are nomads? Experts have documented variety of statements. And also there are similarities and contradictions between the nomads living in Karnataka and nomads in other States. Although the social status of the nomads across the country is same, it is found that they have different occupations and outlook in different states. The present study attempts to document the history of these societies through their stories, poetry, narratives and original epics. The stories, poetry, narratives and original epics of the world are used for a comparative analysis.

Effort has been made to construct a history of nomads and tribes along with establishing the time from when the state of Karnataka and how the communities of Kannada emerged. Here the excerpts from folklore and the established literature are used for a comparative study. We can verify how nomads and tribes have constructed their history. It is common that the history of a communityis developed based on the origin of sound, inscriptions, palm leaves, poetry of mainstream and so on. This is only a conventional academic and popular effort. But here the documents that are developed by someone else are used as authentic references. But it is rare to verify that how the community does feel about itself? How the history has been developed? At least some efforts have been done in

Kannada in this direction. Kotaganahalli Ramaiah's 'Sindh Madigara Samskruthi' and Lakshmipathi Kolar's 'Mastikara Samskruthi' have considered the oral literature as more authentic source of reference. The communities have taken extreme care in perpetuating their own history. Which are these nomad and tribe communities? What is the nature of their Worldly view? We may get answers to these in their origin epic and likewise it is pertinent to have a look at the oral tradition of nomads and tribe.

The history of most of the lower caste and working class are hidden in their oral literature. The pictures of these communities are not clear in the docile literature of our Country. The history of docile literature too is half true. Therefore, it is imminent to consider the oral literature as the reference of history of each community. The experts have to consider these oral references as the authentic references. The history of exploited communities in India can be found in their mythologies and narratives. Therefore, we need to look at the existing mythologies while establishing the history of the neglected communities.

This study emphasizes to understand three important aspects. First is to understand the nature of the stories, poetry, narratives, biographies and origin epics of the nomads. Second is to analyse the Worldly views of local and global nomads and tribe through their original epics along with social history. The third one is to explain the provisions within the cultural expressions of nomad and tribe communities. The elements that becomes face to face could be formulised as follows;

1. To explain the stories, poetry, narratives and epics of nomadic communities
2. To Analyse the Worldly view of nomadic communities through their Stories, poetry, narratives and epics along with social confrontation of these communities both at local and global levels
3. To understand how these Stories, poetry, narratives and epics revolves within the cultural provision and nature of expression.

**Methodology of the Study**

In the present study, keeping the rationale of oral forms as tge nucleus, it encompasses the whole nomadic communities of Karnataka

and India. The nomads have emerged because of the hierarchical system of this Country. Effort has been made in this essay to give a written form for my fifteen years of wandering and the experience of being an activist myself. Visits have been made to the abodes of nomadic communities living either sparsely or concentrated across the State. The present study primarily considers the abundant knowledge of nomadic communities. The past world of lower castes of this country is vast. The present study attempts to analyse the knowledge of the past and the agonies.

The present study considers the treasure of traditional knowledge of nomadic communities of Karnataka and other States in the Country along with global nomadic communities for a comparative study. The main thrust of the study is to find out through their knowledge the Worldly view and oral tradition of nomadic communities.

We can see in the autobiographies of nomads,their life and aspirations which have been dealt in detail. The important aspect is that the various problems of nomads have become the debatable literary questions. Also what are these communities and what are their social patterns that have given these biographies, along with this the sensibilities and reactions of nomadic communities would provide logical clarity studying other works.

The oral epics means those which are representatively sung all the time have been selected, along with this as and when required studies have been done on other nomadic communities, primal tribe, communities and their original epics.

There is one more important aspect here. The referential literature used in the study, does not distinguish as 'written' or 'oral,' instead considers the literature of nomads as a whole. The conventional approach of dividing it as written and oral has been taken from Europe. For which Dr. D. R. Nagaraj explains that " So far we have believed that the classical and oral forms are different but now the time has come to melting points or to leave it up which is coming within. We have been seeing both the classical and oral forms as poles apart. The difference between the two is acceptable only to a certain extent, after some extent both will culminate in one, that have been seen in our Indian culture (D.R. Nagaraj, Samskruthi

Kathana, Ed. Agrahara Krishnamurthy, 2006, p -503). It is an old fashion to differentiate as oral, written, classical and folk. A folk artist and a literate poet can co exist at the same time; both of them are representatives of same social circumstances. Both face the same time and situation, but medium of expression are different. The folk poet may use the words and classical poet uses the scripture to write the poem. But both are representatives of the same foundation. While Kuvempu lived, Eeramma too was a contemporary who expressed herself through songs. Eeramma represents the same present situation as represented by Kuvempu. Both were responding to the life around them. But Kuvempu is the greatest writer using the letters and Eeramma is the tremendous artist of 'Tondi' heritage. For this reason we have left out the dry explanation of written and Tondi in this study.

Levi-Strauss who did enormous studies on the tribal communities of Latin America makes mockery of the dry explanations of Europe in his book 'The structural Study of Myth'. He takes the example during his study when a paper and pen was given to the member of a tribal family, the way people reacted makes him to categorically reject the division as classical and folklore. He ideologically rejects this kind of artificial divisions in his book 'Introduction to a Science of Mythology'.

One of the important cultural thinkers of Kannada Dr. Mogalli Ganesh states that the folk poetics as the biographies of the communities. "The singers of oral tradition of Karnataka or the India while narrating the biography of a cultural hero through which they narrate the story of the community. While narrating the story of the cultural hero they become representatives of him. Since the singer himself is narrating the cultural biography of his community, the singers themselves become the cultural representatives of that community" (Dr. Mogalli Ganesh, Moukhika kathana, 2006, p-25). Through his song, verbal expression and rituals an artist passionately not only involved but also explicitly communicates the aspirations of the community. Therefore, poetry thus becomes an individualistic expression. At the Same time it is also the expression of collectivism. 'Folklore people always express their experiences in a collective form'. Because of this reason, Laxman Gaikwad's 'Uchalya' and

Daroji Eeramma's 'Kumararama' poetics are seen as one beyond the artificial classification as written and oral. While Gaikwad ridicules the feudal system in his novel, the same system has been logically analysed by Eeramma while singing 'Kambojaraja' poem. Therefore, we have left out the perception of written, oral, classical, folklore in this study. Here we have only considered the holistic perception of a linguistic group.

Along with this, selective published or unpublished autobiographies have also been considered. The following is the list of selected biographies.

| Sl. No. | Books | Author |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Uchalya | Laxman Gaikwad |
| 2. | Gabaala | Mullarisab More |
| 3. | Vimuktha | Mullarisab More |
| 4. | Dushkala | Mullarisab More |
| 5. | Bayala Benneri | Balagurumurthy |
| 6. | Alemarigala Antharanga | Kuppe Nagaraj |
| 7. | Gondaligya | A.M. Madari |
| 8. | Akkara Mashi | Sharanakumar Limbale |
| 9. | Budganaada | Balagurumurthy |

The perception of collective sensibility of nomads have been explained and analysed with these nine autobiographies.

The following nomadic communities have been taken for cultural introspection

1. Budgajangama 2. Chennadasar 3. Gosangi 4. Dakkaliga 5. Sindhollu 6. Shillekyatha 7. Sudugaadu Siddha 8. Dombaru 9. Handijogi 10.Mang Gaarudi 11. Gantichor 12. Hakki- Pikki (Pardhi) 13. Rajagonda 14. Soliga 15. Malekudiya 16. Helava 17. Gondali 18. Dombidasa 19. Bylapathar 20. Ghaghidi 21. Jogi 22. Chapparbandh 23. Daraveshi 24. Madaari 25. Kanjarabhat 26. Kaadu Golla 27. Karadi Kalandar 28. Lambani 29. Korama 30. Bovari.

With the experience of organising the above said communities, respectable cultural understandings have been analysed to some extent in this study.

**Importance of the Study**

Dalit literature has become a synonym for social and cultural expression of theexploited. Dalit movements right from 1960 onwards have resulted, Marathi literature or Maharashtra in particular, in written autobiographies that changed the direction of the literature and lead to new form of criticism. This changed the course of history; it was debated about the traditional meaning of autobiographies. It was considered as a form of the west which was documented in Indian literature confining to individual stories were mistakenly considered as autobiographies. The individual centric writings thus shadowed the cultural pluralism. In this direction, these writings did not become the voice of the native down trodden sufferers, physically tortured, social discrimination. Because of this, unsaid borders discriminatory forms of exploited were kept out of this perception.

The other important point is that with the realization of exploited consciousness of the lower strata communities that showed and said the truth devastated the false social realities. This means a writer has become the voice of confrontation of racial system of Hindu caste system through writing biographies keeping alive the inner quest of Identity.In this creative process he has managed artistic density of self experiences as inevitable human centric. To substantiate, I referred many Dalit autobiographies published during 1960, we believe that Surya Vamshi's 'Things a never imagined' and Daya pawar's 'baluthe' can be identified as a beginning of Dalit autobiographies. With these books the other books published later have been discussed for its vividness, dense experience, publishing and social distribution processes in Marathi literature.

We can say that the entry of Dalit autobiographies in Indian Societyis from the land of Marathi. The Dalit thinkers define the thickly populated Maharashtra state as subcontinent of this Country. The land of Marathi has seen the revolution and anti revolution and the development. Today,

the influence of western literature has spread everywhere in the Country and also has changed the conventional base of the social scientists with new perceptions and perspectives. It is not exaggerated that academic discussions, literary discussions, continuous paper articles has given new dimension to the cultural atmosphere of the exploited Dalit. This has resulted in changing the political policies and calculations and also the Dalit autobiographies and movement have changed the political language.

Many neglect their own history as not important. But the insult to biographies created by sensible people will not become insult to them. Because this insult done by the caste prone. This is the crime of Indian Society. The entire society should bow down. While documenting the insults undergone by the elders of the nomadic community on one side, on the other side it ignites the new generations and also the cultural process moral empowerment.

We have enough incidents that the present educated, officials and the economically powerful instead of becoming the heirs of these biographies have shown their back. Where is the cultural direction of these escapists, it is again towards the exploiter with wearing masks. Again adjusting with the exploiters contributes for the class system. It is the mindset of those backstabbers who could lose the tradition and forget the memoirs.

We have to keep two important points in mind while explaining the biographies of the nomads. This is also the logical base of the study. It means the insult of inhuman past and inspired futuristic success. This freedom happens with Ambedkar's consciousness. The nomads who lived in acute poverty without any notice, the institutionalized Indian caste system and priestly class which is responsible for this on one side and on the other side organising, through social connectivity they themselves has to be awake and free from the mental ignorance and build the movement. Ambedkar would naturally remembered immediately by the exploited for this.

A few biographies either oral or written have become epics reflecting the intense difficulties, pain and agonies of the past with utmost emotions. The intention of these writings in a way tells the historical truth, that too

in front of moral court of human beings. These have become the affidavits that how the caste system has heinously tortured the humanity. The biographies of Dalit and nomads explain the importance of this.

The fastness of time fades the memories of a few writers and novelistswho do not believe their own biographies. They forget the atrocities that they had written. It is not a surprise even if they withdraw their own creations. Therefore, the biographies need to be considered as primary references. The entire Indian society was taken by surprise when 'Uchalya' was released and the response it got from all the corners.

## Nature of the Study

The present thesis comprises of six chapters which as follows;

The First chapter deals the objectives of the research and also the scope and importance of the research

The Second chapter describe the cultural multi facet of the Nomadic autogiographies. Their myths of origin, creative narratives in differet forms and its sublime lead the `epistomology with all creative cultural grandure. It is a formal distinct to percive as oral and written forms otherwise the presant chapter absorbs the forms and interpret the philosophy of vision in solidarity.

The chapter also refer different texts like stories, narrativies, myths of origions besides the texts of autobiographies like Gabala, Uchalya, Akkaramashi, Gondaligya, Bayala Benneri etc. The chapter effectively explore the social interaction that has been since independence. The first generation literates, wirters emerged as an activist group to re-visit into the veins of their social history. The writers of these tribes voiced their agony through a different language which is very new and shocking to the mainstream society which felt bewilderment.

The Threed chapter emphasise more on the oral literature which has explored in different forms. It is with the myths of the different Nomadic tribes, the social history is being collected and criticaly evaluated here. The different myths of origins are not in solitary understanding but with multifaced and inter related The path that crossed for the ages has a

different experience that every tribe has preserved the details of their cultural travalogue. The social identity of these Nomadic tribes is more related with their origins. The chapter explain the important four streams of these origin myths as followes

1. The Narratives on the origins of the mother earth and the sky
2. The myths on their traditional occupations
3. The details related to these occupations
4. The myths and narratives on caste hirarchy

The current chapter inculde the texts of the myths and stories as it is being narrated. Each nomadic tribe has a collection of memories which are discussed in the next chapter. These myths and tales bring out the tribal perception of divinity, deity, celebrations and mystery of human curiosity, the cosmic formation etc. The chapter also narrate the creative journey and dettachment also. The Nomads became rebel groups as they came across fudalism. Thus they could sing the different allegories which are documenties of thire protests. It also explain different Odes and Ballads as an expresssion of performing arts. The tribes like Budgangam, Sudugadusidda, Gosangi, Dombidas, Gondhali, Helava, Jogi etc are the bards of oral tradtion. In a way these open theature expressions are inevitable actions to interact the soceity they became more and more creative to sustain their endevour to the social humiliation and social isolation. Their reciations are so powerful to endorse their social history to encounter the current politics.

The fourth chapter deals with selected autobiographies which are in written narration. The influence of Dalith movement, literature which has helped to focus social concerns has a great impact on the first generation Nomadic writers. Every writer consider his description of life in his tribe to be the voice of a collective representation of life in all Nomadic groups. In some places the very silence of these communities eloquently raises questions about their pathetic social life. The important features of these written forms implicate that the writers see themselves as travellers on the same sad journey. The chapter explain vividly the autobiographical detials in the texts like Gabala, Uchalya, Akkramashi, Bayala Benneri, Alemariya

Antharanga, Gondhaligya etc, and also reffered the other important Dalith autobiographies for social understanding.

The fifth chapter discuss the common social concerns expressed both in oral and written traditions. The oral form is a living tradition merged in every tribe. It is a stream of cultural carrier in a way that has submerged in the written narrations. Though the physical performance is confined, the impact is more with the sensibility of writing. The oral traditions has a great advocasy for the nobile human values. It has been philosophied and sublimied in all oral epics sung by great legends like Eramma. The cultural dimension of this tradition are still a kinitc forces in all the autobiographies written later. It is intersting to examine that how best these creative writers from the Nomadics tribes have carried out the task of cultural and social advocasy forward.

The genuine purpose of this chapter is not to search common differences but quest of researching the philosophy of Nomadism. As a result the both generes are not different in understanding. The both streams are the literary expressions as a part of the tribes self narratives.

The sixth chapter is to understand the unique tradition of self narratives which are `sung and written'. An attempt is made clear to emphasise the cultural advocasy sung by the bards like Eramma a legendery character. It is also an intersting satire to notice that how these tribes have been marginalised from all social concerns. As an impact it is still a suffering with a mute silence. The tribes became unsettled nomadic and later stigmatised as criminals and as a result the cursed social jouney is expresed in the form of written narratives.

The chapter also discusses the intensive consequencus that imposed on Nomadic tribes. The formal de-notification is repealed from the criminality as a technical factor. Otherwise the social scenario is still seen in the eyes of main strem society. Overall this chapter predominantly deal with three major issues. The first one is to difine the social dimenations and secondly to explain the nomads unique crativity which is `sung and written'. Thirdly to understand their present socio-economic status. The autobiographies are social affidivites before soceity as sence of their resistence.

# AUTO BIOGRAPHIES OF NOMADS–MULTI FACES

Background

Epics on origin

Stories

Narratives

Poetics

Autobiographies

Eloquence of Nomads-Worldly Contemplation

## Chapter 2

# AUTO BIOGRAPHIES OF NOMADS–MULTI FACES

### Auto biographies of Nomads-Multi facets

An effort has been made to describe the multi facet expressions of oral tradition of nomadic communities. As said in the previous chapter that without distinguishing the nomadic expression as 'oral' and 'written' an effort has been made to analyse the expression in totality. There is a need to consider the origin epic of nomads and the modern biographies like 'Uchalya' as one. The expression of nomads and other lower communities came to script form only in recent times. The constitutionally guaranteed reservation pushed to upper level and first generation of educated opened to new thinking. The life of so far undergone despair, torture and insult came in written format that horrified the Society. The puritan class who claimed that they have incredible history was amused with the writings on grief and sorrowful life of the lowest strata of the Society. The blown up uterus of the Indian Society slowly tried to digest the creamy layer of middle class emerged due to reservation.

The majority folklorists although being aware of the conspiracies of the conventional society carefully retained their expression which could not be digested by the ruling class. But, the expression of the folklore perpetuated in many forms. The verbal expression is the most powerful medium of weapon of the working class. The helplessness and pain which could not be put in writing, have taken shape in verbal articulation percolating down the memories that have solidified through the generations. This memoir is an embodiment of confrontation, rejection, acceptance and also the intense anguishes of face to face situation. In other

words the bottom end exploited communities always confronting their own present while accepting it. They have revolted and protested while silently tolerating their situation. They have been expressing through both ritual and verbal forms despite the dilemmatic situationof their present life.

The verbal and ritualistic expressions of the bottom end communities thus have been expressed in many oral forms. Their inner world has been strengthened with their proverbs, riddles, songs and biographies. We can see some of the forms that these communities have been expressing. The following are the various forms of bottom end communities.

1. Epics of origin
2. Stories
3. Narratives
4. Poetic narratives
5. Autobiographies

**Epics of the origin:**

The epics of the origin are one of the most prominent forms of expression of the bottom end communities. There are numerous stories about the origin of the Universe, Nature, man and woman. These epics comprise the worldly view of respective community along with their present situation.

The Anthropologists while writing the social history of communities normally go in search of classical documents. These documents mean the excerpts from poetic forms, Inscriptions and the classical mythologies. For example it has become a custom that suppose if there are any statements in 'Pampa's 'Ado Purana' about a community and their occupation, based on the same statement, decisions would be passed. The scholars depending on these kinds of classical documents do not consider the oral tradition and history of the communities of which they have been doing the study. Many a time the folklore reference considering it as authentic document, the oraltradition has been compared with the classical references and questioning the basis of the authenticity. Books under subaltern culture or

any PhD essays only the written documents have been considered as authentic. Although a community has come through having its own history, but while writing the history of our society it becomes unauthentic reference. The European research models have given birth to these kinds of notion. They still believe that while writing history of certain period the written and classical references are more accurate and authentic

The history of most of the lower caste and working class are hidden in their oral literature. The statements about the communities in the classical literature of this Country provide an unclear picture. And also the history written in this classical literature is half truth. Therefore, we have to consider the oral literature of each community as their history. The scholars had to consider these oral references as the authentic references. The history of exploited communities in India is hidden in their epics and stories. This can be seen in some of the epics of the nomadic communities.

**The Origin Epic of Dombaru:**

``A disabled baby is born to one person from Reddy community. Fore teller says that the boy will be a threat to the Reddy family in the future. This prompts Reddy to tell his wife to keep the baby aloof. But the heart of the wife does not accept it. The wife hides the child in cattle room. Unfortunately each day the cattle start dying. Finally the child is kept away even from the cattle room. Mrs. Reddy gives the child to a beggar to foster it. But the beggar throws the baby into a dried up well. Nobody comes forward to take care of the child if the child disliked. The cry of the baby in the well is heard by Parvathi and Parameshwara. They come down from Kailas and bless the child with organs and an earthen pot is given to the child for begging. The child getting its organs is overwhelmed and jumps from the bottom of the well to the surface. The child looks at Parvathi, Parameshwara who gave the organs and ardently seeks the blessings. Later this child takes up 'Dombarata' as its profession. The continuation of the followers of this child thus became 'Dombaru' community.''[1]

``Once a Reddy's wife carrying food to her husband in the afternoon, gives birth to a female baby. The place on the outskirts of the village where the child is born, in the same place a hut is erected. Meantime, the

elder wife of Reddy creates confusion that the lady and the baby are from different caste. Reddy gives her the entire property. The younger wife who is at the out skirts is given a rope, drum and a pole. The daughter and the mother learn the skills through the materials provided by the husband and exhibit the skills to fill the belly. Nobody is ready to marry the daughter who is on the street walking on the ropes and exhibiting the skills. The same daughter of Reddy thus becomes 'Dombara Chinnasaani' and a prostitute. Therefore, prostitution among 'Dombara' community is perpetuating like a custom or a rite."[2]

``The story of the origin of 'Dombaru' and the first person of Lambani community revolves around the same person. It seems both Lambani and Dombaru were once the same community. Dombaru is predominantly seen in Nellore district of Madras province."[3] They identify a Telugu village 'Maddalapuram' as their origin of birth. It is been said that 'Dombaru were in the Court of Vijayanagar Kingdom and were given prizes. Even now 'Dombaru' claim that they have received Jammala Madugu, Tadapatri, Paddatturu and Gudumacherla village as gift. After the collapse of Vijayanagar, Dombaru have spread in the Mysore region.

Dombaru call themselves as children of 'Mothathikapu'. ``This kapu is an orphan and handicapped right from the birth. Lord Sri Ramachandra and his wife listening to weeping of the child give the child his organs. Later he gives up the 'Dombarata'. They identify their origin through Chinnamma. To release her father who is in the jail, Chinnamma exhibits her skills in front of the King. The king is impressed with her skills and releases the father. Nobody marries Chinnamma; hence she takes up prostitution as profession. "[4]

``Pal Kollahati are basically a nomadic community and found mainly in Marathawada region. They construct temporary huts for living. They carry the materials for the construction of hut on a donkey. The men folk of this community are extremely lazy. Women look beautiful. They earn money through sex work.Their spouses only support the sex work. Dukkar Kollahati men are hard working, they hunt wild bhor and also they rare pig. They have settled and involved in Agriculture. They also work as

security men in the village. Dombari are the branch of Dombaru of Telengana region."[5] Compared to other two communities Dombari are backward. Pal and Dukkar Kollahati speak Gujarathi mixed Marathi language. But Dombari speak a mixture of Telugu and Kannada as their mother tongue.

According to one of the historical evidences, ``both Domba and Korava are cousin groups. Both the brothers search for alliance. That was an acute shortage period of brides. Thus both of them tried for the same girl. Dombaru said they would give 20 'varaha' as the bride price while Koravas said they would give 25 'varahas'. Hence, the bride became the wife of Korava. Since then both the communities are separated and also developedmutual hatredness amongstthem."[6]

According to other evidence, King Kampila of Kampli were said to have relationship with 'Ratnaji' of Dombaru.The King Kampila was attracted and married 'Ratni' for her beauty, dance and skills.But Ratnaji loved Kumararama, son of King Kampila. She invited Kumararama secretly to her palace and behaved ecstatically; Kumararama advised her and left the place. The insult and anger made Ratnaji to tell the King against Kumararama and ousted him from the palace. As per the instructions of the King Kumararama was murdered.

The family deity 'Jatinga' cursed Ratnaji to throw her'pallu' to all, from then on the Dombaru women too involved in prostitution. According to one more evidence Ratnaji was thrown out of the palace for her misconduct. She then becomes the women of the street. Her children too involved in acrobatics and dance. They only became Dombaru or they were called as Dombaru. They did not perish in the room, wandered in the forest and because of their skills and art came in contact with higher caste people and sometimes with the kings are a clue in these evidences. Sometimes these evidences get entered in literary works thus turns to be a historical reference.

Understanding the origin epic of Dombaru in comparison with other nomadic communities could lead us to analyse in totality.

**Origin epic of Helava:**

``There were seven children to an Okkaliga. The youngest of all was born handicap. Her mother loved the youngest immensely may be because he was a handicap. The rest of 6 children working hard remarked about the partiality of their mother and also hated the youngest for this reason. They tried to kill him. Whenever they tried to kill the handicapped brother a bull used to rescue him. When all of their efforts to kill the brother did not materialize they went to take share in the property leaving the handicapped brother alone. Lord Shiva knowing that how can a handicap person survives taking property and working? For which comprise was planned. Shiva gave a verdict that let the inherit property be divided among the six brothers, but the handicapped boy should go to each of the brothers house on a bullock cart with a bell and take his share to make a living. The brothers gave him what he wanted. This continued. Later everyone of his clan continued the same as their profession. The generations of this disabled were called as 'Helava'. They made a living as foretellers and begging fromOkkaliga. ''[8]

``Once upon a time all thirty three crores gods met in the court of Lord Shiva.'Shrungi' and 'Bhrungi'were important in the meeting. 'Shrungi' was equally worshiping both Shiva and Parvathi but 'Bhrungi' worshipped only Shiva. Coming to know this Parvathi asked Bhrungi why he worships only Shiva and not her. Then Bhrungi said Shiva is the only god he worships, whatever the respect and adoration I have is for Shiva. Parvathi could not take the words and she became angry and cursed Bhrungi to lose his hands and legs along with sucking blood and flush within no time only through her look. Only the skeleton of Bhrungi was left and deciding not to be seen she made him to hang in between the sky and earth. Shiva came to know about this through Narada, he scolded Parvathi. An altercation took place between them. 'Bhrungeshwara' is my son; I am impressed with his qualities. He should not be punished like this thus he took his trishul from his hand and gave support. The skeleton of Bhrungi came down and stood on it. Finally Parvathi accepts her defeat and surrenders. On the orders of Shiva she fills back the flush and blood andhe was given 'shiva nandi' and 'linga' with blessing to be alive as long as the

universe exists and was further blessed to be aware of the difference of caste, clan, praise the happenings thus lead the life by collecting grains and millets as remuneration and disappeared. Later the Helava clan developed as Bhrungeshwara is their first person. "[9]

## Hakki-Pikki

Hakki-Pikki belong to Rajput clan in the past. They say that their Kshatriya relations are stinking rich in Gujarat and Maharashtra. ``The Great Shivaji is their idol. Because of the war between Akbar and Rana Prathap Singh they were forced to migrate to these parts.To capture the entire Country, Akbar came to Rana's city and erected a tent there. Akbar pleads Chamundeshwari, in turn she gave seeds of tamarind and mango saying that you sow both the seeds, Akbar cannot defeat you even when seeds are grown big. Rana did the same as goddess had told him and Akbar started removing his tents. Amma had also told one more thing to Rana. "Take this horse which with one whip goes to 'Devakonda' and for another whip it reaches 'Suriskonda'. He claimed the horse and with one whip he reached Devakonda and bathed there. Then the water turned into insects. With another whip he reached Suriskonda and washed his mouth. Again the goddess appeared and said "take this sword, whether you get Akbar or his son" and disappeared. Then there was confrontation, he did not get Akbar instead he got his son, blood flew like water. Goddess had told him to show the sword with blood to her first and Rana forgot to show the sword with blood stain to Goddess, instead he put the blood on his forehead. Then the goddess cursed him that 'let the sword turn to you'. Rana died. His wife came and saw, she could not figure out her husband. She requested the Goddess to show the head of her husband so that she can become 'Sati'. Then the head part stood and within ten minutes it fell down. The wife told her son that I too will become 'Sati' with your father and went on to the pyre and died."[9] The small children of them without any thing, begged and hunted for food wandering from place to place and came to Karnataka.

## Gomberamaru of Shillekyatha

``According to one of the historical evidence that Shillekyatha are

Maratha Okkaliga's and their primary occupation was agriculture. A girl belonging to this clan had a relationship with a goldsmith Kathare Kalachari which led to throwing her out with her seven children from the clan. The gold smith taught the children to prepare dolls using leather and other materials and make a living. The out caste people came together in groups and migrated to different places. It is opined that these are the people spread across the Country and also places like java abroad.""[10]

**Sudugaadu Siddaru**

One of the Interesting evidence is there about the origin of Navakoti Siddaru. ``'Shani' (Saturn) who was pestering all the gods and goddesses but yet to pester Shiva, Ganapathi and Maruthi. One fine day, Shani comes to Shiva and says" Oh! Lord, excuse me, tomorrow I want to enter into your kingdom. The next before the arrival of Shani, Shiva goes into graveyard and digs out the freshly buried dead bodies and hides in that place. After the pestering time of Shani, Shiva comes out from that place. Shiva had perspired since there was no air and light. He takes out each drop of sweat and throws it to earth. Through the thrown drops Navakoti people were born. Because they were born in the graveyard, they have been called as 'Sudugaadu Siddaru' and for their livelihood they were blessed with 'Rudrakshi' Vibhuthi, Saffron cloth and 'Kamandala' to go from place to place telling about the happenings to the ignorant people for the development of the world."[11]

**Natuvaru**

``Many come down to earth for repentance to earth because of the curse of Shiva. They used to stay for some time and go back. But one person who was taking care of Shiva's musical instrument 'damaruga' played it out of curiosity. Both the 'Bholoka' and 'Devaloka' were perturbed, while Shiva was with Parvathi at that time. The gods begged Shiva, immediately found out the incident through his enlightened eye. Without any bias he punished the culprit. The punishment was never given to anybody in the past. The punishment was that culprit should not come back to Shiva's place Kailas. The culprit was born and instead of

'damaruga' he used 'mrudanga' to play and dance while narrating his mistake. The Natuvaru considers they are the continuation of this culprit."[12]

**Kavalethinavaru**

``Once upon a time there was a hefty demon known as 'Vyaghrasura'. He was macho and impressed Shiva with his meditation and received a boon that not to be killed by anyone. From then on his troublesome attitude increased. The saints and gods could not tolerate and went to 'Vishnu'. Vishnu showed 'Brahma'. When they approached Brahma, he showed the finger at Shiva. Shiva listened to the pleas of gods and prepared a bull or 'Nandi' to counter the demon for which Vishnu too came to help. Nandi took shape of an ox, Shiva became the pied piper and Vishnu became the ring master of the ox. They all came down to demon's land. They entered the palace while exhibiting the skills of ox. The demon too was interested. He asked to show the skills and variety of skills were exhibited in front of him. The demon was very happy. The demon was so happy that he said 'you ask for whatever you want'. The piper asked for an umbrella that has .....The demon got angry. He swallowed the piper at once. Then he asked the ring master to 'ask what he wants'. The ring master asked for his throne, again he got angry and swallowed him too, mean while the bull brawled and while saying that 'You have swallowed two of our men, I won't leave you' it went on him. The demon swallowed the bull too. They did not die even getting inside. Vishnu pierced the stomach with his bell, Shiva with the stick of his 'damaruga' sliced the stomach. The bull rapped the intestine to its horn and came out, other two also came along."[12] The demon died and collapsed. Shiva, Vishnu and the bull (Nandi) had finished their task. Gods gave a sigh of relief. The clan of this community narrates this story from then on till now about the death of evil over good.

## 2.3. Stories:

### Stories of KaaduGolla

"It seems the stories of Chitradevaru and Katamadevaru narrate the origin of universe among the tribes" (Krishnamurthy Hanoor, 1998, p - 842). This is absolutely true.

``Once Shiva and Parvathi while travelling to earth via the sky saw forest fire. Listening to the cries of animals Shiva decided to protect them. While controlling the spread of fire Shiva had perspired, Parvathi cleans the sweat of Shiva by her pallu of the saree. Three drops of sweat falls on the earth and three children are born. Among the three Kataiah is the first, Second one is Chithaiah and the third one is Obalanarasimha. Parvathi considered these three as her children since they are born out of sweat of Shiva. Shiva had to create ways for their survival. Shiva established a township called 'Chitragiri' and made all the three to live happily. Shiva and Parvathi gave a book entitled 'chintamani', a golden bowl and a golden stick to Kataiah and left to Kailas (Thi. Num. Shankaranarayana, 1982, p-102). It is believed that the three children grew over a period of time facing different situations laid the foundation for the existenance of tribal communities. Later Eshwara shifted them to 'Chitragiri' town. Meantime, Chithaiah falls in love with a Brahmin girl 'gangemalamma' but her father Bommaiah was against their marriage. Hence Bommaiah tests in several ways Chithaiah and along with his brothers Kataiah and Obalanarasimha win the game but cannot live together with his wife."[13] Later Gangemalamma leaves him and settles at Bommanahalli of Arasikere. The three brothers ruled Chitragiri for some time and died. Later they were worshipped as the gods of Kaadu Golla (Krishnamurthy Hanoor, 1998, p-482-483).

There is another belief that 'Pathe' god too was born with the blessings of Eshwara. The mother of *'Pathe devaru' Daanashalamma* used to give one breast of her to rest of the children while exclusive one breast to 'Pathelinga'. Hence he was very naughty. Even Parvathi tried to take care of him and punished but he did not yield. He grew to the extent of defeating Shiva. He also exhibited many adventure that impressed Shiva. He imbibes the power of third eye of Shiva. Because of Karadi Ballappa Pathelinga became god and settled at Kudalalli where Suvarnavathi and Vedavathi Rivers merge in each other with the construction of a temple (Krishnamurthy Hanoor, 1998, p - 483).

Kethelinga came to earth directly from Kailas. He disguised in saint's atire and was begging. The KaaduGolla believes that Kethelinga did many miracles including diminishing the ego of Reddy.

**Stories of *Kanjarabhat* community:**

``There are many stories among Kanjarabhat community like other nomadic communities. Once Shiva while travelling felt the need to have one able person to rule the earth and he identified one such person among his 'Gana' and ordered him to rule the earth. Obeying the orders of Shiva he came down to a place called 'samsi' and became land owner. There were no human beings only animals were there during that time. It was extremely difficult for him to control these animals. He pleaded Shiva and Shiva obliged him by giving a man and a woman. They are the first persons of Kanjarabhat community."[14]

When Aryan's entered there was chaos among the local populace. They begged *'Kali'* to safeguard them from Aryans. *Mahakali* created a man and through him she defeated Aryans and the same person is the first person of Kanjarabhat.

Shiva created the earth along with land and water. Through that he made the organisms to exist. To provide the basics to organisms he created moon, sun, air, light and rain. There are many stories like this in this community.

**Stories of *'Gosangi'* community**

``There was only 'Devaloka' before the birth of earth. Once Brahma came to earth to see how it is? The earth was completely surrounded by water. Thinking that there is need for one person to rule the earth he sent one saint. The saint went back looking at the water everywhere. Then Brahma created a son by name 'Jambamuni' and sent him to earth."[15] He first pushed the water little bit to different sides, he could see the earth. First he established the land and created 100 children. The first one born among the 100 is the 'Gosangi'. Gosangi was born before the birth of organisms, moon and sun on the earth. The *Gosangis* claim that after the birth of Gosangi the eighteen clans have come on the earth. Jambava muni is their first person.

**Raja's story of Hakki-Pikki**

``Once there was a king. He had only one daughter. There was no

male child but the Raja considered the children of his kingdom as his children. People lived in his kingdom very happily. The daughter grew like the full moon; he sent her to 'gurukula' and gave her good education. She learnt all that was taught to her. The only deficiency she had is that she never laughed. The king and relatives and also the people were not happy with this. To find a solution for this he tried in many ways to make her laugh and finally made a public announcement that whoever makes my daughter laugh would be married to her and would be made as the king. But nobody could make her to laugh."[16]

There was a granny living with her grandson in the same kingdom as wage labour. The grandson grew but did not become intelligent. Therefore, everyone would call him as dull headed or 'dadda ranga'. One day the granny was down with fever. She could not go to work for two to three days. The granny says to grandson 'look there is nothing to eat, go to some work and earn'.

The next morning he was going out without even telling the granny. On the way a farmer Ramanna was cultivating the land. Pedda ranga went to Ramanna and asked to give him some kind of work. He said collect all the weeds, grass and bring it together and burn. Ranga did as told, and then Ramanna gave one rupee coin for his work. Ranga felt very happy looking at the coin and wanted to show it to granny. He said to granny that he worked and earned the money, take it, what was there, an empty hand! Granny asked ranga how you brought the money; he said I was holding in the hand, somehow it is lost, granny said dull headed boy, you have to keep the coin in your pocket, ranga said that he would follow from thereafter.

Next day walking in the streets he found that Kenchakka was milking the cow. Ranga asked for work. She said clean the cowshed that is filled with dung, urination and dust. Ranga did the work; in turn Kenchakka gave him a ball of butter to carry home. Ranga excitedly kept the butter in his shirt pocket as told by granny. He came home in a hurry and told granny to take the butter, but what was there, the butter has completely melted on the way. Granny asked where is the butter and Ranga promptly

said he had kept it the pocket as told by you. The granny saidyou should keep the butter in a vessel and Ranga said he would follow that.

When Ranga went for work the next day he was given a kitten. He kept the calf in a vessel filled with water and went towards home. By the time he reached home the kitten had escaped. Listening to Ranga, granny said that you fool; you must tie a rope along the neck and bring it. The next day Ranga worked in a floor machine and in turn got floored grain and as told by granny Ranga tied a rope and pulled it all along the way to home. He saw the bag near the house and the bag was empty, the floor had spread on the road. Granny told to him to put it on to the shoulder and carry, he nodded.

There was a tank on the outskirts of the village and a washer man Muniyappa was cleaning the clothes. Ranga approached him and said he would also wash the clothes. Muniyappa said yes and he cleared all. In turn Muniyappa said he has no currency, hence, he would give a calf of donkey. Ranga happily took the donkey and put it on his shoulder and started walking on the main street of the town. The King's daughter saw this procession and started laughing loudly. The assistants saw the daughter laughing and informed the king and the queen. All of them came and saw that the daughter is laughing and clapping. The king thought who and what is making her to laugh. Everyone laughed looking at the procession.

The King was happy for his daughter, he ordered the soldiers to get the person who made his daughter to laugh. They bring Ranga along with the donkey. The daughter is immensely enjoying and laughing looking at the scene. King was very happy and as he had made the announcement he married his daughter to Ranga and made him as the King and he left for the forest.

### Stories of Sindhollu community

Sindhollu narrates a story around Dyamavva. ``There was a beautiful girl in the Kabbaliga community. The Sindhollu boy falls in love with her, not disclosing his community he marries her. A male child is born to them. The child was named as 'Jambalappa'. One day the Sindhollu youth carrying a basket and hitting his body with whip and shouting was seen by his wife

and she is disturbed. She shouts at him for marrying cunningly. She runs away from him. He follows her. Knowing well that he is following, she cursed him "doesn't look at my face, go every day to beg wearing mask like this". From then on the priest wears the mask and carries the idol of 'Dyamavva' for begging."[17]

## Kugamma

The priest of Sindhollu was dumb and became difficult to beg. The community people were depressed. One day in his dream the goddessappears and requested that "I am Kugamma, construct a temple here, when you go for begging you talk to my idol along with singing, you would thus speak". From then on wards the idol is taken in a tray and in front of her they loudly say that "mother, Kugamma has come, Durugamma has come, Sunkalamma has come, and Jambalamma has come" and she has been praised. From that day Kugamma has become Gandara deity.

## Stories of Dakkaliga Community

### Story of Maramma Deity

``A mother and a son belonging to Scheduled Caste were leaving in a village. Suddenly the boy alone goes to another town and joins as a laborer in a Brahmin family. The head of the family enquires about his caste. The boy claims that he belongs to Brahmin community and an orphan. The head man accepts him to work there. Over a period of time the daughter of the head man accepts him as her husband. The daughter becomes pregnant. It is a custom to fulfill the desires of the pregnant woman. The boy had told her in some pretext that his mother is alive and she pleads him to take her to his mother. The boy says my mother is dumb and unable to talk but I will bring her here and show my mother to you. He comes to his mother and explains what has happened. I will take you there and show my wife but you have to help me by acting like a dumb person. The pregnant woman is overwhelmed looking at the mother and makes lots of sweet dishes. All of them had food. After having the food the house hold people went to attend to their work. The wife was next to the kitchen. The son out of curiosity asks his mother how the food was. The mother

sarcastically replies saying will it be that good like a tender bull of our Gowda's house? This was heard by the daughter and keeps the secret to herself. Meantime twin male babies are born to them. They nurture them with love. The children were sent to school according to the age. But the children instead of going to the school they were playing with Calotropis gigantean (Swallow wort)plant and preparing chappals. This became a routine. One day the mother decided to go to school to find out how their children are doing. On the way she found the children playing. She is disgusted and came to know that her husband belongs to Scheduled Caste and even then she adjusted herself but the children too are following the same path. So she decides not to leave them like this, brings the children home and wants to put all the three in one room, somehow, one of children escapes and comes out. She puts fire to the house without leaving other two to escape. Then she declares that this is the punishment for cheating me and spoiling my life. I too will die like this. But even if I die I will be reborn as 'Maari' and take you as a sacrifice as he buffalo. I will cut your leg and put it to your mouth and from the fat of your stomach I will make to light a lamp on your head. She cursed the children that the son would become 'Dhulumaari' and the other son to become 'Asaadi' who could make a living by telling her name and she too dies. Thus, she was born as 'Maramma'."[18]

The Gowda of the village had a buffalo. The buffalo did not give birth to calves but was happy. Later it gave birth to a male calf. The baby buffalo grew very strong. Gowda also felt happy and fed the calf sumptuously.

``Once Gowda was caressing the little buffalo, the buffalo nodded its head. The horn of the buffalo hurt Gowda while it shook its head. This led to a wound and kept on increasing day by day. The pain was unbearable. Despite applying medicine it did not come down. Meantime the local fortune tellers 'Koravanji' and 'Jogi'came to Gowda's place for begging. Gowda asked Koravanji, she said that the buffalo that did not give birth for a long time, when it gave birth, the calf has grown and it has to be sacrificed to Maramma by constructing a temple for her. Then your house will be filled with wealth and health. Gowda although not interested to

sacrifice his lovely buffalo, could not tolerate the pain and constructed the temple and sacrificed the buffalo, immediately the pain vanished."[19]

## Stories of Nomadic Kurubas

The elements of Nature Wind or air, earth and sky were born in the beginning. Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara along with the first person of nomadic Kurubas 'shanthamunthaiah' is also born in Kailas. He kills the demon and establishes relationship with sheep of 'Haalumatha' prepares a musical drum 'dollu' and a rug.

The sheep that were created by 'Shanthamunthaiah' were to be reared on rotation by Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara and it comes to the turn of Parvathi. While rearing the sheep Parvathi opens the door of the sky and comes down to earth. She makes the sheep to go into an ant hill. The important point here is that the first person to enter the earth is Parvathi and the first animal to live in the wombs of the earth is sheep.

Parvathi from her right side breast mixing with soil creates a man and from her left breast mixing with soil creates a woman and keeps in front of Shiva and requests him that these two be the primal persons for the creation of the earth. Shiva smilingly obliges the request and both the figures are filled with life. They are named as 'Muddappa' and 'Muddavva' since they are born from the soil. And these are the first persons of 'Haalumatha'.

## Marriage story of Rain god

``Once upon a time there was a king who was ruling seven Kingdoms. He had only one daughter. One day she was bathing and it rained, she was not happy and murmured that 'you come at odd time, you should have come in the night, and the rain immediately stopped hearing her murmuring. After the bath she was well dressed by her assistants. There were clouds all over. She felt empty, meantime the night began, and she lay down on the golden cot. The darkness thickened and the princess went to sleep.

The rain was waiting for the darkness. The rain came to princess wearing ornaments made out of gold and other valuables. He woke up the

princess. She awakened in haste and she could see the rain. She asked the rain why he has come.I came when you were bathing, you were not happy and told me to come in the night, so I am here said the rain. How did you come? She asked. From the sky replied the rain? The conversation began like this; the princess was afraid and expressed the same to the rain. He tried to console her.It became wee hours and the rain said that he will go. But the princess was not ready to send him. He said he will come again tomorrow and the princess was not at all interested to send the rain.

The rain as promised came every night. They spent time together. Both of them enjoyed the intimacy. One day the rain opened the topic of marriage with the princess. She said she will ask her father and let him know. The rain went and said since I have lots of work I will send the crow tomorrow and inform him about the marriage."[20]

The rain and crow came to princess palace with fabulous gifts. They could not see the princess despite several attempts. The crow is disgusted with waiting. The crow goes back keeping all the gifts near princess room. The sister of rain watching this in hiding, takes away all the jewelry and fills the trunk with Scorpions, snakes and frogs. The princess after returning looks at this and opens the trunk in a hurry. As she opens the palace is filled with Scorpions, snakes and frogs. She shouts and sleeps without combing her hair. As usual rain came in the night. The princess did not look at him. The rain was afraid and tried to talk to her. She did not respond. He got angry and thought she has head weight because of her richness and decided to bring her down. He cursed her that let all your richness vanish before dawn and left the place.

It was dawn, the princess became a pauper. The king and queen were wage labourers to take care of their only one daughter. The princess too worked. It became too hard. Finally they came to a house of rain to work. The king and queen were working on the farm. The princess was doing the house hold work. Once she was guarding the finger millet and the rain disguised himself as a cock, started troubling the princess and their differences continued. The king, queen and princess were walking without chappals, gradually the rain became kind and gave chappals and the princess refuses to take.

Looking at her ego, the rain decides to marry another person. The sister comes forward to give her daughter and rain accepts. The date is fixed and all the work is carried continuously. The princess doing the household work late in the night is completely tired. The rain cannot see her agony and helps her in pounding rice from sparrows.

The day of the marriage is fast approaching. The entire city was decorated. Flowers were thrown on the streets. People assembled. Before entering marriage mantap, the rain goes to princess taking her to a side and enquires, in turn the princess tells about her dissatisfaction. The rain realises the mistake and he calls crow. Finally the conspiracy done by his sister is known to everyone. Realizing his mistake the rain marries the princess. He generously gives gifts to the guests and punishes his sister. All incidents are narrated in 'Devaloka' and shower of flowers is ushered, the princess gets back her property and both of them live happily.

## 2.4 Narratives

## 2.5 Poetic Narratives

### Kumararama, as sung by Daroji Eramma

It has been confirmed that the hero of the Kumararama poetic narrative is the historical character Kumararama. Kumararama, the son of Kampila and Hariyaladevi was a warrior. His childhood bravery shows the character of a great warrior. Kumararama kills Ganarama son of Ganapathi, defeats Ganapathi king and returns his kingdom Kampila of anegondi.

He fights with Delhi Sultan and wins the war. This brave Kumararama and Ratnaji love each other. Although Ratnaji is married to Kampila but for her inner satisfaction she keeps trying to get Kumararama. He did not yield to any of the tactics and finally she kills him.

Kumararama being born as warrior and died as a brave man is the cultural hero of us. Recently Dr. M.M. Kalburgi has edited the latest version of Kumararama's poem and has given a different view point to that time. Providing historical details in his book got the reference from the palm leaf at 'Samskritha samshodana Parishat at Melukote. It is not clear till now the names of the old and new books. It has been said that

'Panchalaganga' wrote the poem. The situation in middle age of Karnataka is detailed through the poetic of Kumararama.

The written poetic narratives seem to be in conflict with the ruling class. But the oral tradition provides its own values and life through local heroes against the established values and cultural institutions.

Kumararama and Krishna Golla poetics sung by Eeramma of Budgajangama community analyses the social sensibilities of Kumararama and Kambojaraja. It can be understood through this how the established values in written poetics are different from that of folk through oral tradition.

"Anegondi town was just aside of the river
Thus Kumararama was born
Together was born Olika
In Hirakampli with the grace of Eshwara
Oh you have born in evil world and you will see evil"[21]

Eeramma must have had the idea of the Evil world. The impact of conflicts of the modern world the contradictions, wars and the social hierarchy is discussed and listened, by self and her community people that has pushed the communities to the outskirts of the villages have different definition of evil world all together.

"You do not see the world
You are a free bird Ramadeva
You are a free bird and won't be in town
You are not to see the world being in town
You won't see the world and also the evils, in humans".[22]

It is possible only to communities who are sensitive and humane about the centralized power centers.

"Do not raise your hand to beat the poor
They are not thieves oh Shiva
They grow the banana farms
They sow sugarcane and they press

These kinds of humanistic values are justified by Eeramma in her rendering of poetic narratives in favor of tribal communities and working class communities. The thrust of the biographies are to provide to communities those who live under the threat of humiliation and harassment and consoling them and also to the Society.

The pearl ball has fallen in Ratnaji's house, friends of Kumararama go to get it but it is not given. Finally before Kumararama goes to the house his mother warns him.

She feels bad and tells
"Rama your life will go for guarantee
Rama your life will go Ramadeva"
Responding to it Kumararama says
"That mother may have bad characters but I do not have"[23]

While narrating that how Kampilaraja deceived him without showing the face of Ratnaji and urges to make love with Rama. When Kumararama goes out in refusing, Ratnaji lies to Kampilaraja and he believes in her

"Chi, a son disowning a mother
That kind of son should not bealive"

He orders to kill Kumararama and his friends. But because of his maternal uncle's forethought and political intelligence safeguards Kumararama without killing in a basement. Then during the war between Delhi sultans, Kumararama fights like a warrior and wins the war. Kampilaraja hearing that Kumararama is not dead, orders to kill Ratnaji. Even during these kinds of situations Kumararama looks at Ratnaji as his mother.

"You are a mother, I am a son
You are the life and I do not mingle
I can leave my life but I do not mingle
Rama does not mingle may lose life
Let it be Rama, the Anegondi world do not make you live"[24]

The experience of personal life of Eeramma is seen with kindness

from a women's perspective through Ratnaji and takes her to reincarnation. But in classical poetry Ratnaji who kills Kumararama dies tragically. The feudal values do not become values for tribal communities. The collective agony and insults makes the feudal values as negligible. The aspirations of suppressed and helpless people have been expressed appropriately in this poetry. Eeramma's poetry echoes the feudal values of Kumararama and the helplessness of Ratnaji.

### Written Autobiographies of Nomads

The so far published written autobiographies have been inducted in this study. The perception of oral and written tradition is the same, although there is difference in narrator and writer with their experiences, the perception remains same.

Refusing the difference between the classical and folk forms, a commonality can be found with all dichotomies in the perception.

'Uchalya' by Laxman Gaikwad is the first biography of nomadic communities. This is also a self plead of wounded communities that have been labeled as Criminal Tribes. This work makes it public that the headman without receiving any civic amenities and leading life through stealing explores the inner conflict. Gaikwad establishes the life of people who have been repressed by the police, who have been rejected by the villagers, though there is a wave to call as 'Hindu' by upper class but the social life of loneliness within being a lowest of the lowest atom communities. During the walkathon of a nomadic, does he walk towards civilisation or does he go beyond making distinction between inferiority and superiority? Or build a struggle alone with Ambedkar's consciousness, with all these aspects Gaikwad's 'Uchalya' undoubtedly is a significant book.

The book explores historical incidents of nomadic people going in a procession to District Collector and submitting a memorandum and questioning that we are citizens of this Country and what are our rights?

The strong social system of this Country does not understand the sufferings of the workers working in the textiles sector and eating jowar stolen in the fields. The land owning feudalism controlling vast lands

contrary to the nomads who are the worst, who collect the grains from the cow dung which eats the jowar are the reflections of the contradiction. It is true that with these experiences, the writers search towards equal society.

### Gabaala

The writer of 'Gabaala' book hails from Gondali community. The journey in Gabaala descriptively portrays the situation of his community. The tag of Criminal Tribe in 'Uchalya' surrounds Gondali community in various forms. The nomadicness, begging, unorganised, loneliness, separatism and inferiority all have seen among neglected communities. Somewhere studying for a Degree going in search of his community to a unknown territory gives a feeling of going from present to the past. A child of the community covering with 'gabaala' grows while looking at the unknown world is the theme of 'Gabaala'. This sounds the thickly covered silence of these communities.

### Illegal Generation

It would be suicidal of those people who do not have the imposed identity of the caste in this caste prone Country. The social life of children who do not have father or who do not get the tag of his caste would be miserable. Sharana Kumar Limbale narrates the social conflict of the children who do not get the identity of their fathersare seen in the same way as the children of Devadasis. Although there is insult from caste system in the villages, a person who has no caste will be gradually done to death in isolation. The other possibility is that escaping to cities where he can come over the ghost of caste or while refusing the caste and facing the social contradictions.

Sharana Kumar Limbale opens the cruel faces of social life in his 'Akrama Santhana' book that he was born to a Dalit mother and a land lord father, grew up with a Muslim grandfather.

### 'Alemariya Antharanga' (Inner self of a nomad)

The writer Kuppe Nagaraj of Dombidasa community narrates the deep silence of nomadic world in his outstanding book. Simultaneously,

documentingthe innocent and natural development of his society in a particular geographical area also the foot prints of negatively scrawling community. Kuppe explains the sordid story to get away with hunger and the art forms despite being the cultural ambassadors of this Country. It unmasks the commissions and the Government in keeping away systematically the orphan communities from reservation. Farcically, even during such times, the nomads with their musical instruments go on singing their history. Each description builds a separate image and it juxtaposes the oral tradition and the present situation.

**Gondaligya:**

Of all the autobiographies so far published in India, A.M. Madari's Gondaligya is outstanding from its artistic point of view. It exposes the intense and patient silence without any sarcasm of self masturbation of a sensible mind. A writer growing in nomadic life style with true human love and inner self that has been wounded by the feudal system have manifested in the social forms throughout 'Gondaligya' book. Many a time the hierarchical deceased society does not accept the innocence. The contradictionthat happens in the life of the writer is the reflection of the anti progressiveness of the social system. At the end the pure human loveof a nomadic in establishing the society being a teacher, organiser, and writer is the liberalness of the orphan societies. Madari's biography showcases the insight without any prejudices or preoccupations thus establishing the unique talent of person with poet's mind.

A.M. Madari dedicates the book to his nomadic community by saying "the people who have been living haplessly in the slums can neither live nor die".

This autobiography provides very descriptive accounts than other biographies published so far. His life entirely spreading in thirty chapters, the chapter which starts from 190 pages entitled "towards new direction" sounds his conscious life.

First he gives the details about his family meantime he narrates oral tradition through a song sung by his grandfather.

``I repeatedly tell you a story

Be attentive to listen

I am back after witnessing a miracle

Madnolli is small town in sindagi taluk''[26]

He opens the biography with a song sung by his grandfather about a mother killing her son 'Balachandra'. Explaining about his nomadic community 'Kondya', the village people threatening that they would 'handover him to Kondyajja' seemingly represents numerous untouchables being a nomad. The writer while narrating the judicial system says that 'Kattimani' of the village was powerful like Supreme Courtthat was at 'Gowdagaon' village.

'Kudike' is one of the most natural rituals among the nomads. A woman 'Devayi' runs away with another person leaving her husband Bheemya. She will be caught and brought to the village and the people accusing her about purity, she questions that is it wrong to run away with another person since my husband is not potent? Then Bheemya is sent to a prostitute to test his potency. When it is confirmed Devayi is sent with the person with whom she had run with a ritual 'Kudike'.

The writer explains the powerful status of village panchayat even now among Gondali community. It is strange that the exploitation of women is more heinous in other nomadic communities. The writer recollects his childhood while going for begging in the houses of Muslims telling that 'take take the sheep meat'.

The writer earnestly recollects that when he was struck in the mud, a person who helps him to come out of it scolding 'you people only know to deliver like pigs'; the father of the writer falls on his feet for his help. Like Mallari sab More, the writer explains that the movable properties of his community 'Gabala' is known as 'Hasibi' in Kannada and his own 'Maragu'language is called 'Dhotagi'. The writer recollects that the 'Budabudaki' communities who deliver astrology have been called as 'joyisa', Dosegera, Bududukera etc by local people.

The folklorists mockingly say that the wife of dosagya died in the bed on this community. The 'Gondhaliga' book is significant from linguistic

point of view. It is unique for its introduction of North Karnataka language with its nativity. The security of women among nomadic communities is narrated through an incident.

"There were few good looking young Gondaligya girls with us. The local people is troubleing them. They were playing volleyball near the temple. During the evenings if the girls are engaged in cooking or in other household works they used to hit the ball in that direction. Even in the mornings the ball was hit in the direction wherein the girls are bathing and in the name of collecting the ball they used have a look at their half covered body. Once when elderly women started a quarrel, the players said that "why does your girls take bath when we are playing, they too want us to see their body, there are plenty of girls available, why do we need girls who lead life by begging" and came to them. Then the men folk came pleadingly to their girls and requested that there is a mistake let us not fight" These were common incidents for nomads like us."[28]

This kind of torture was common and sometimes the nomadic girls have been raped. The only remedy for the victim is to get out from that place with her kith and kins at the earliest.The harassments are not registered at the police station as the nomads feel that there is more fear and insult from them. The nomads living at the bottom of the social ground beat their wives mercilessly are the exploitation of women among the nomads. It is also a status symbol. The entire book depicts the hard life, loneliness, helplessness and insecurities of the nomadic communities.

I used to go to beg in the mornings. Begging till evening was my profession. There was one touring talkies on Jawahar road at that time. The film 'Jagan Mohini' was very popular, may be Harini was the heroin of the film, everyone was murmuring the song which seemed like the tune of a Hindi film.

We used to be in some villages like Kinnala and Mangalore when we are at Koppal. I was happy at ginigeri and Hulagi villages too. We used to stay at Railway Stations. It was fascinating to see the movements of the trains. I used to wait for hours that some train would come. Aunt would scold me to go to beg.

In the autobiographies of a nomad inspiring personalities are found which changes course of the life by a sudden situation is faced with the Ambedkar consciousness. Sampangi teacher, Ranganathaswamy teacher, Kariya naik, Keskar and Philomena teacher who have extended the life of the writer in 'Bayalu Benneri' book. Likewise, 'Mahajan' teacher who enrolls Madari into school becomes inspiring.

``You name us as Gondaligya, but what benefits the Government has given to the backward communities, he consoles saying 'people like you should send the children to school, you have passed on the life and you must make the children life better'.

Agreed, when can I go to the school, when do you register the names? Father enquired.

Bring tomorrow, this month is meant for registering or enrolling names. Come in the morning, I will be there and he talked some other issues with father and left. Children who were playing gave their ears to our discussion. We watched the direction they were going. Father felt enlightened, later I came to know who talked to us was the teacher.

Father discussed at home to send me to the school. Father was not regular at home. Therefore, sending to the school did not remain in his mind for long. Often he used to teach good writing, mathematics and tables. He reported of sending me to the school with mother and warned me that 'do not to play too much, go to school neatly'. I spent the day thinking that some change is going to happen in my life morrow.''[29]

Mahajan teacher becomes such a social conscious power in enrolling the writer to the school. The writer's words are self explanatory to personify the character of the teacher. He blesses the nomad like a 'bakaala' saint when there was no Dalit movement or Dalit sangharsh samithi.

The name of the person who is responsible for my schooling is Mahajan. His appearance itself was enough to respect him. He was soft spoken and always charming. He had no entry into 'echaraswamy math' since he was untouchable. Later I came to know that was why he was worshipping from outside. Like a harijana, Mahajan can be the name of

untouchable. But he was really a 'Mahajan' meaning great person. His dress was white Nehru shirt, linen cloth and white Gandhi hat. His dress was enhancing his image. He was taking drill once a week. During the parade, he used sing a song of Gangappa wali in the front. All the students used to follow him.

"Our speech is Kannada, our blood is Kannada

Our mother is Kannada, our language is Kannada"[30]

Singing the song with a loud voice would emotionally inspire anybody to love Kannada.

Madari while creating his student life successfully completes his tenth standard in distinction. On one side the acute poverty, on the other the colorful artisticlife of his community, the intense insecurity of morrow, his cursed travel goes on like a soliloquy of a nomad in the nook and corner of the Country. After completion of tenth standard, during the vacations he works in a shop to earn money for the family.

The then Prime Minister of the Country Lal Bahaddur Shastri died in January 1966. The condolence went on for weeks, even the school was declared holiday for a week. The Banashankari fair was also during the same time. Two fairs in North Karnataka go on for months - Badami Banashankari and Savadathi Yellamma fairs. The Utensils shops camp months together at Banashankari fair. I used my vacation working in the shop to make little money. I had come with more than hundred rupees being in that winter for about 8 to 10 days. People put fire and warmed up themselves in groups and had to spenf sleepless nights.

Mother was happy with my earning and showed it to all the people of the lane. They scolded her saying that "forget the money, see what has happened to the boy". 'Even I do not like him working at this age, but what can I do, I am not keeping well and he does not listen to me' she used to weep.

The writer used to go to the places with a guess where his parents might have migrated. There too the people of his community had involved in various occupations. Some were selling aluminum vessels, women were

selling stationary and some of them were selling glass. They would become sober if there is transaction some days. The writer used to go for begging during these days is the reflection of the present situation.

It was raining right from the dawn; there was sun shine till evening. We just couldn't go out for marketing. During such time we were sent to beg for roti or for food. I went into the town to beg. I begged while getting drenched, my basket came to full. I was about to go back to the temple where my parents were residing. There was a lonely house on the street on which I was supposed to come. A boy came outside carrying some pieces of roti. I started walking; the boy shouted "hey! Stop, I have brought roti for you, you are going away and he followed. I had to wait since I had no idea what curiosity he had. He came near me and recognised me, he was my classmate. His name was shivappa taminala. He was smart and mischievous. He was one among them who thought that I would be from a rich background.

Recognising me he mocking said what is this Madari, why have you come to our town, to beg..... I could not utter a word. I was lost and could not speak properly. The tortures that bother the nomads go in silence. Let that be the people of Uchalya, Budgajangama Sudugaadu Siddaru and Dombidasa of Kuppe Nagaraj, all of them had the hard hit of the upper caste and Madari fell into the anger of a Gowda that resulted in sending him out from the Hostel.

``He pointed at me and said "he is a fool; he says that I have steeled tomato. Gowda looked with his angered eyes and started beating me. He took the bronze jug and hit me on my back, shoulder and all over my body. You son of bitch of Gondaligya, have you become infatuated by eating free food. We showed kindness since you people live on begging and you have become torpors? You son of a bitch you call others as thief and went on beating till he was tired. He did not let me to utter a single word, and said 'You pack your things and get out, the other children also spoiled because of you and he threw my trunk outside. "[31]

I could not say anything due to fear. He did not yield to my weeping. The rest of the children somehow managed to say that he is not a thief,

despite that Gowda did not listen and went on scolding and abusing me along with beating. Many students assembled in front of the room.

The intense loving relationships make the writers to be loveable throughout their life. It would be extremely sad when they are demised. But in the autobiographies of nomads, the writers themselves could not make to the last rite of their parents are cruel and in- human instances. The writer of 'Bayala Benneri' did not get the information of the demise of his father and accidently he comesfor the eleventh day for the death ritual.

Likewise, Madari could not make it to the funeral of his mother since he did not get the information.

I received a telegram from my Uncle; I had no bus fare to go to Shigli. I showed the telegram to Basavanagowda, he gave me money, butthe bus and train movements were shattered because of the border disputes between Karnataka and Maharashtra. Somehow I reached Shigli catching private busses. Three days had passed since mother died. I had received the telegram a bit late. The third day ceremony was going on. Aunt wept embracing me, although being with mother for past two months she did not die but within fifteen days of coming to Bagalkote she has died. Krishna too had reached after one hour of burying. She could not see both the sons.

The next day uncle showed me the burial place. She did not enjoy a single day and had died at an early age. I remembered of the line saying that your son is intelligent and he will keep you happy. She was mother both to my uncle and me. Both of us had lost a irreplaceable element. Many of them have written poems to express their feelings to the mother. No poem can showcase the mother in totality. Her allure was washed away beyond recognition when I went twice or thrice to Shigli. Perhaps it must have been over powered by the floods. Her life had been washed away in acute misery.

The allures of nomads could not be recognised as time passes. When the nature is in the state of 'Jangama' the sincere nomads too are in the state of 'Jangama'.

Mother's death was bothering the writer. He did not have any

ambition. The ghost of 'caste system' had made the literate nomads and untouchables as living corpses. The day to day conflict with the mind set of upper caste has become an integral part of life of insult and humiliation. The writer recollects one such incident of going to one of the friend's house who belongs to Lingayat community.

Dr. Janganna spent about two years at Annigeri by establishing a private clinic. I went to see him at Annigeri before he joined for M.D. He was living with his mother's sister. One afternoon he took me to the house for lunch, on the way he warned me that he would tell his aunt that I too belonged to their caste and behave in a natural way and should not create a scene.

As it was expected as soon as we went home, aunt enquired about my caste, job and such details. As he had already told me I was repeated. May be the aunt knew about the mentality of the Doctor, hesitatingly she invited us inside and asked us to freshen up. We did as told. By that time she had already kept 'Vibhuthi' for us along with readying for lunch. Dr. Janganna applied 'Vibhuthi' (sacred ash) on his forehead and also signed me to do the same. I too applied 'Vibhuthi'. When she came to serve food she looked at me "yeh! What kind of Lingayat is he, he cannot even apply 'Vibhuthi' properly and which all caste you bring home". It was a hard slap on my cheek. After coming out of home, he said 'see how she is, always grappling with caste, knowingly did I make a mistake of taking you home'. I said this is not new to me and let it be, it is also an experience' and laughed.

Madari applies for a job in the high school where he had studied after the completion of his degree. Sangana Gowda tells him to 'come for the job of sipoy' and he rejects the offer in anger. Within a few days he got an order as science teacher. When he goes to join the school, the head master who has taught the writer takes him aside and said "Sangana Gowda is upset since you have spoken in front of him, it is his greatness to assign the job, for first morsel itself you have broken the stream, do not forget that you are the student of this school, do not show your head weight as a teacher". I simply nodded my head but Gunjal sir's dialogues were piercing in my heart like a drilled inscription.

With all this the writer is insulted as a sipoy in that school. He won't get a house for rent because of his caste. A master instead of cooperating with his disciple does not even send for approval of this writer and the writer undergoes the torture in coldness.

The house of Prof. Gadag was not rented out for several months. One day he had come from Bangalore, he sent a word to me 'See, Madari though you are a Gondhaliga' you are our boy, I refused to rent out the house when you had asked, I felt bad, how can we not show mercy on you? It is important that more than caste you are grown ul in front of us. Now you settle in one house'. Though he spoke softly, I could understand the meaning but could not express it I said "Sir, my salary is irregular, paying rent may be delayed and you must adjust'. He ordered 'O. K. it happens to everybody, try to make it regular and fixed a rent of Rs. Thirty per month and told to give the rent to one of his friend.

I really do not know whether it was right to go to a new house in this situation. But with some guts I shifted to that house. SomehowI managed to pay rent as suggested by the professor of that monthto the person who was assignedbut he was in anger and people called him as 'Benki swami'. He asked how much there is.I said 'thirty rupees'. 'Five more' he said. Thirty rupees I repeated. Suddenly he was angry and threw the money I had given on my face. He has told me it is thirty five rupees and you are giving thirty rupees, I am not a middle man to get commission. Take this money and get out. I was not in a position to say anything. Let it be sir, I must have mistaken and collected the notes adding another five rupees to it. He took the money and said "I told him to rent out the place to good people but he has given to some son of bitch, what I can do in between" he kept on murmuring.

Meantime the writer has been appointed in a Government school as the Head Master at Kanakagiri in Raichur district. He becomes son of the family with his concern and honesty. He also narrates about the wife who is still not responding passionately. He receives the best teacher award. His approach not to beg anything becomes a model. Mean while he has been selected as Assistant Treasurer from KPSC. He expresses his love towards literature through establishing a likeminded group at Koppal.

With all this the writer Madar was unable to construct a house and remains sensible and honest. Some clerks sarcastically asked him whether he is Sc or ST, he feels sad that long back the nomad community should have been under ST tag, but the social system that includes under Sc, and they are unorganised. Right through the history the communities without having identity of their place and the feeling of accepting the place wherever they are highlights universal consciousness of the writer.

Now, the elders and the entire Gondhaliga community have to think, we have to organise ourselves and fight to avail the benefits from the Government. Reforming of a caste means, reforming of the bottom down person is the reform of that community. When would this happen?

I had gone to Syndicate Bank to avail loan a few days back. The Manager asked me 'I am from which place'.

I said 'Hole Alur' since I had spent much time there and it has been recorded even in my academic certificates.

He asked 'whether I have property there'

I said 'nothing'

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'Where do you live now' he asked?

I said at 'Koppal'.

'Do you have any property there' he asked

'Not there too' I said.

"Then you are from which place? You do not have property anywhere. If you do not own any property how can you claim you are from that place" the manager raised several questions.

I said "Look if I go with your thinking then I have to represent the Nation. I am asking for a loan based on my salary, say if you can give or not"

The Manager said laughingly "o. k but it is strange people like you are still there" and gave the loan.

I have been in Dharwar for the past six to seven years in a rented house. I will be retired in another three or four months. I have to face

consistently the question that "which is your place". Wherever I wanted to stay back was not materialized so far. Whenever I face the question 'which is your place, it' leads to humiliation. I remember my uncle Shankar always used to sing

'What can I say when they ask which is my place

I laugh at it

What can I say when they ask which is my place'[32]

Among the Indian languages in general and Kannada in particular the "Gondhaligya" biography simultaneously exposes the 'multiple facet of nomadic life against the love, wishes of the society and also representing the ill effects of few individuals. It will be a disaster if the work has not been discussed thoroughly among academic circles and also a great loss for a serious reader in understanding the depth of nomadic life.

**Bayala Benneri**

The title itself imperatively expresses that it is from the past memory to the present. The other important book 'Bayala Benneri' is an effort in exposing the life in the open and finding the foot prints of their cultural expressions of millions of people who live in the open space and it is still the abode and work place.

A community while realizing gets the social identity. But social identification of hierarchy through their performing arts leads to present changes and the difficulty of understanding the uniqueness is aptly explained by Balagurumurthy in 'Bayala Benneri'. The writer describes that his community following the footsteps of philosophical saints of Southern Karnataka in particular and the cultural roots of Budgajangama through several of their oral poetics and sayings adjust with the main stream society. He also explains that the changes from the forest dwelling life style to the open space life at the out skirts of a town and the loneliness and the interest to become part of the society. Primarily the writer exposes the life and changes of three generations. He introduces the primal mind and life of his forefathers. He opens up the dichotomy of settling in towns during his father's period and also the acceptance and rejection of the society.

The writer introduces the life of rural communities losing their agricultural practices in the period of modernisation and struggling like handicaps of his community. Although this cauld be a reaction of literacy or education but this is an autobiography of his communities Budgajangama and Sudugaadu Siddaru remembering through identifying and recollecting the cultural bases. The book is the voice and memories of exploited people that passes through from Individualistic consciousness to collective consciousness.

## 2.6 Eloquence or Rhetoric of Nomads: Worldly contemplation

This part of the writing is the analysis of epics of origin, narratives, poetic narratives, poetry and written biographies. The understanding of these forms and its universality are shown in detail. The way the primal communities have accumulated the world through their sub conscious creativeness has come in their eloquence that has been expressed in many forms. This collective eloquence according to time and situation have been maturing and also undergoing changes. The meditative along with hard work are the central force of creativeness of these communities before the speech becoming letter. Speech means worldly contemplation for these communities. Primary raw material for their creativity is the life experiences in their surroundings. Therefore, the expressions of primal and working class communities' depend on the intake of worldly life. It is imperative that the worldly eloquence of these communities means the social history of primal communities. Although on the onset it may seem unnatural stories but their origin epics opens up the thought process of these communities. The origin epics are the embodiment of story of the birth of earth, the story of the origin of water, the evolvement of nature, the love between man and woman and the continuation of human race and generations. It looks extremely romantic. It seems as the speech of supernatural elements. But the sadness and anti supernatural powers are exhibited in performance. Although it appears to be in search of supernatural powers of origin epics it inherently reflects the adjustment with nature and the impulsiveness in consolidation of knowledge. Mogalli Ganesh substantiates the same in this way "The folk poetics are like the forms of nature likewise also the forms of sincere creativeness of nature.

The nature is major force for the perpetuation of folk tradition. The continuous interaction with nature has enhanced the creativity. The totalityof folk language is manifested in nature and also continuously follows the action. Therefore, the oral tradition converts the worship of nature into individual cultural form (Mogalli Ganesh, Oral tradition, 2006, p-28 -29). The stand of these communities on the birth of earth and all organisms are by nature itself is the fruit of their creativity which is purely a physical perception. This physical perception working class has shaped their understanding method. There is no room for super human power's romantic beliefs.

It is significant that women play a prominent role in the origin epics. Women have the highest place in the eloquence of these communities. The unification of man and woman after the birth of earth thereby contributes for the continuation of generations; this perception of these communities undoubtedly is the mirror for their physical thought process. Along with this these origin epics prominently projects the sad journey. All the cultural heroes start their journey being cursed. The people of each community who have been cursed are the cultural heroes. These cultural heroes are the first person of their community too. The cultural heroes are cursed without their faults or with their innocent behavior. Among the Helava community, the first person is being cursed and comes down to earth to give birth to Helava community. These cursed heroes become the reason for the birth of nomadic communities and their traditional economic sources. The nomads for their situation in the present and for their nomadic life style, give historical or mythological reasons in their origin epic. These communities expressthe self hatred feeling that the mistakes committed by them are the reasons for their nomadic life style. Therefore, the present life of these communities are expressed figuratively along with the torture of self hatredness are highlighted in their origin epics. Therefore, the travel induces melancholy, self hatredness and cursed are inevitable elements in the origin epics.

There is a contradictory face too in these origin epics. Those epics wherein the nomads call themselves as cursed are with their innocent social behavior go on defeating the feudal powers. The innocence and

helplessness is considered as their fate, the same fate is considered as the strength and becomes weapon in defeating class enemies. The weakness is the strength, fate is the humbleness, the helplessness is their utmost confidence and the curse is the boon. Likewise the nomads become accepted for their creative strength in the present through figurative expression. The narratives of nomads manifest paradoxically the intense weakness as their immense skills. Because of this the land on which they stand is the ultimate in their nomadic narratives. Their day to day agonies are their strength. The narratives of nomads sarcastically questions, condemns the hierarchical and unequal class classifications. The Kamboji raja who ruled egoistically was dethroned and was made to raise plants to make his life fruitful. The feudal society which looks down upon nature has been defeated in these narratives to highlight the social realities. To condemn the male chauvinistic rule of Kumararama, Ratnaji is born again as the daughter of Delhi sultan in the poetic narrative of Kumararama. The male dominated society with its established values declares Ratnaji as immoral; to question and protest the same values Ratnaji is born again and again. Here is confrontation between the Kumararama's feudalistic values and Ratnaji's right to live. These narratives are lively with strengths of questioning and rebelling against a power centered system. The class consciousness of nomads has been evolving their social realities. Therefore, the eloquence of nomads that are considered as romantic is perpetually neglected. The readymade and European traditional research methodologies become hurdles in understanding the social realities of neglected communities. The eloquence and worldly contemplation of the neglected communities is possible to understand only through the native research methodology which is in front of us.

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# AUTO BIOGRAPHIES OF NOMADIC COMMUNITIES: ORAL TRADITION

3.1. Background

3.2. Epics on Origin

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## Chapter 3

# AUTO BIOGRAPHIES OF NOMADIC COMMUNITIES: ORAL TRADITION

### 3.1. Background

As 'Madura Chenna' a poet said long back that "scholars put forth all arts, the story of Dunduchiye of Gorava, the story of Beera on the earth".

It means to listen to the story it is not the story of Gorava's or Beera. Those are not literature. It is not at all art. The words of Madura Chenna cannot be accepted. He criticizes the oral folk form negatively. In his critics the vachanakar, Dasa and the real godly saints were singing in the streets. Even now they sing and tell the future; Madura Chenna with his scholarly ego does not consider these people

"The street children grew up, the children in the room perished", this proverb answers Madura Chenna. The fact is that all the struggles and facing the State starts from the street. Therefore the street theatre in the present is a weapon to counter the State. The writings here are wholesome expression of nomadic world, it would be relevant to analyse through street.

It is not possible that a writer's writing to be one way or one person. He would be part of the heritage. The 'heritage' word is used here confining to the conventional analysis and discussion of poetry. But T.S. Eliot in his work 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' states that "the historical consciousness does not give only the past awareness, inherently the awareness of the present too is imbibed. This historical consciousness spreading through the body compels the writer to write".[1]

The riddles, conventional songs and folk songs among the many nomadic communities are perpetuatedby listening and transforming them to the next generation.

The life styles, behavioral patterns, beliefs, convictions and values without many changes perpetuates from ancient time to the past in a traditional society. The evolution of these societies itself controls the changes. Individual interest is on par with collective interest.

No poet or an artist can be complete by separating him from the community. Even to this day, the nomadic communities perform their performing arts in a collective having an integral relationship. This is the historical consciousness in protecting the individual too. Therefore, the individuals always hop for his community and primary relationships. For this purpose their songs are explicitly repeated during the concert of oral songs. The momentum that takes place when there is a creation of a book that reflects simultaneously in all the previous art works. All the cultural thinkers while explaining about the culture does not distinguish as upper or lower, instead analyse the life in totality.

"The sum of knowledge, perception and natural behavioral patter that is being shared and beamed by the members of a particular communityis culture". [2] Even among nomads the knowledge generated through culture is significant.

An individual in a society gaining the complex nature of culture comprising knowledge, art, customs, rites, character and strength.

As Maxim Gorky states that "There will be ruling class or a prominent force that controls the flow of knowledge in a particular period of time"[3] can be accepted. Many a time there can be difference from individual commune depending on geographical area. But the worldly view, tastes are shaped under prominent pressure.

*"The master classes have always striven to monopolise knowledge and have with held it in every way from the people, to whom they have revealed crystalised thought only has instrument to consolidate their power over the masses... This was done because, it was feared that armed with knowledge the people would refuse to work".*[4]

Madura Chenna scolding mercilessly the world of one community, how the traditional knowledges have rejected the pressure of high level system. Even during this kind of invading situations, how the creative memories of communities have perpetuated through the generations is amidst of us by Eramma's oral world. It unfolds the hindrance as the search for knowledge expands. Many languages are disappearing in the rapid influence of information technology. The biographical studies analyse the various forms of individual centric and its surrounding the oral poetry again contemplates with culture, civilisation, and creativity.

In Africa, the native communities like Makayi, Kikiyu, Thurkhana, Kaara, Mazango, Samba, Ibo and Dinka are coming out from the false fantasies of colonialisation. And this is also an warning for all the primal communities.

"The conscious present is the awareness of eternity" "Analysing the historical conflicts and present situations of nomadic communities, have retained the internal movement. It may not be seen outside but has been inherently responding equivocally. The lower tribal communities rising through culturalisation and organising are the parallel movement"[5]

There is no movable or immovable in this movement. It goes on creating itself the system of community. Also the lower communities have been continuously rebuilding the system. But the Indianism and mono cultures are not the culture of the Nation. The Indianism means multi linguistic and multicultural state.

From this point of you if you look at the history in our text books, it only tells us only about the confrontation of Brahmanism of the Agrahara, Jainism of the Basadi, Buddha and Shavian and their down fall. ``The Brahmanism always tried to induce all the other cultures that are confronting with it. Because of this, the Buddhism and Jainism though were born in India have become anti cultural forces confronting the influence of Brahmanism. This further developed as Buddhism and Jainism with separate entities thus established the 'Vachana movement', its own inner contradictions it metamorphed as the philosophyof anti progress. The communities and cultures that did not get along with these are the

folk and the lower communities."[6] The nomads who are the heirs of native culture protected the society by keeping away from the Brahmanism.

The Cultural heroes like Kaiwara Nareyanappa, Manteswamy, Mylarlinga, Yethappa and Junjappa become significant in this direction. Theyflow the river of wisdom through their experience and occupational skills. But the Brahmanism always making futile efforts that trying to incorporate these communities into its fold, otherwise create confusion among the lower communities on religious reasons.

The nomads stand above from this conspiracy and imprisonment. These nomads have been opposing with their uniqueness and complexity. The pride of these communities lies in retaining their social, cultural milieu against the natural hurdles, the rejection showed by the upper castes. The settled communities have the historical support of Classical mythologies but the nomads for each of their community have experiential origin epics oral tradition. This rich cultural broadcast has spread all over the Country like the ant hills. The varieties in rituals, mythologies, clan symbols, traditional occupations have protected the life of nomads. The main stream communities with their physical egoism have forgotten their history, where as the nomads have carefully perpetuated their traditional knowledge being the owners of it are living in open, tents have successfully maintained the social relations.

In the matrilineal system the marriage takes place by giving bride price in joint family style. They have human knowledge that the girl child was never treated as burden or insult. Because of their ritual 'kudike' has not allowed the family life to perish. The entire tribal society accepting this practice has kept their oral guidelines intact. Therefore, the nomadic communities and tribal communities even in the era of globalisation have been praising their cultural heroes thus like under current have further enhanced their traditional occupations.

Although not recorded in words, pushing to the corner have retained their cultural skills. There is no desire to exploit the nature here. In this backdrop, the study of autobiographies of tribal communities means it is the study of social justice. Through which if the nomadic communities

would have got the self respect and also internalizing the meaning of development and being part of the history of the Nation would have humbled in a stage. Researchers should have to have this responsibility.

The communities always looking eagerly the outsiders to be the vanguard or to be their leader have been used for selfish motives by the researchers having the mindset of Brahmanism. But the tribal culture is so strong and unique that it did not perish amidst of all deceiving. Today, these communities are selecting their choice of culture. The study of biographies of these communities is nothing but the contribution given by the neglected cultural heroes through oral poetry to the Indian Culture.

There is no dilemma in this adjustment. 'Past lives with the present' has not been focused on the poet, rather it is on the poetry. The poet does not have the personality to express. But his personality is a definite medium. The significant feelings and experience of individual can play a negligible role in poetry. It is a treachery to social consciousness to look down the rich life of nomads and their inevitability to beg in the streets and their creative oral forms.

The intention of classical references and other materials that contribute for the study too have collectivism. Hence, the study aims logically to study the knowledge treasure of nomads as two primary streams -the oral and written streams. The oral stream is analysed that contains the poetic narratives, the origin epic of the communities, traditional songsand narratives.

the oral tradition of the real nomads like Budgajangama, Shillekyatha, Dombaru, Kinnarijogi, Dombidasa, Helava, Kaadugolla and Myasabeda have been analysed in the studyfor this reason. The study intends to understand the situational importance rather than participatory evaluation of the complete texts of one community.

``The writers who want to become the voice of Dalits does not publicise the history and the cultural details of their community, it would be a treachery of their primary culture and also putting the community into a dubious situation that was supposed to be represented by him in the

future. To avoid this, through the outcome from the study of history, the literature and rewriting of history has to be a continuous process. "[7]

Although at one stage the false notion that the tradition and culture are lower to dominating culture, soon it is cleared that there is no lower or upper, it is in fact, falls into the influence of one another than dilemma. Though it appears as there is an outer pressure for the nomadic artists who sing oral poetry to satisfy the folk people, but it is essential to make their narratives effective with their experience.

The expressionists and other thinkers say that the main thrust of singing poetry is to instigate and inspire the feelings. Instigating feelings has been misunderstood that carrying to reach the audience. The artist imbibing the feelings and reaching it out to the people depends on the soul of the poetry. It may appear that the forms like hearsay, drama, burrakatha are deteriorating but it does not. The rural folk even to this day listen to Eramma attentively. The Kolar region listens to poet Nareyana with at most involvement. Overall, while analysing the oral poetry of the nomads, Eramma belonging to Budgajangama - a lowest community among the nomad's, the biographic elements can be seen in her poetic narratives. The published and unpublished works sung by Eramma while the story expanding has induced the intentions of the community.

Eramma without knowing the caste and clan sings Balanagamma, Poetry of Krishna Golla, Marwari shet, Syasi Chinnamma, story of Yellamma, story of Balichakravarthy, Adavani Lakshmamma, Babbili Reddy, Bheemlinga, Jyasinghraja, Mohammad Khan and Gangigowri.

## 3.2. Epics-Origin

Here is a collection of most of the epics from various nomadic and tribal communities from different geographical regions. There is no uniformity in these epics. Each one of them is unique. These have retained the cultural assimilations of each community along with the ups and downs of inner world of the two communities. Broadly, the epics can classify in four divisions;

1. The mythology (epics) on the creation of sky and the earth

2. The mythology on the creation man and woman

3. The mythology on the evolution of traditional occupations

4. The mythology on the creation of caste hierarchy

Without classifyingthe collected mythologies is presented as it was collected from each community. The analysis of the mythologies is done in the next chapter.

## Origin epic of Dombaru

It is common that the social anthropologists while writing the social history of communities go in search of classical documents. The classical documents mean the great poetics, inscriptions and excerpts from the classical epics. For ex. suppose there is a mention about the community and their occupation in Pampa's Adi Purana, based on the same excerpts come to conclusions has been happening like a custom. The scholar who does the study depending on the classical documents does not consider the oral tradition of the communities. Even if they consider the oral folk form again that is compared with the classical documents thus questioning the basis of it. It is found that the books under Sub culture series or any PhD researchers studying the communities take only the written documents as authentic. The community taken for study having its own history does not become a referential document while writing the history of our society. The European anthropological studies have given birth to these notions. Even to this day it is believed that the written and classical references are only the authentic documents to write the history of respective periods.

The history of the lower caste and working class is hidden in their oral tradition. The classical literature of this land about the communities is vague and half true. Therefore, we need to consider the oral literature of each community as authentic. The exploited of India have their history hidden in their epics and narratives. The epics on Dombaru community have to be seen while writing the history of this community.

## Excerpts of Rajavali by Devachandra

``In the past Domba was an Okkaliga in bad situation living with

girls. This fellow humiliated other cognate kinsman. The second fellow sent out the first person. He did not have shelter or clothes to wear, stayed at the outside of the village underneath a tree and survived by begging. He came in disguised and sent him out not to enter the town for begging. He was outside the town and was very sad and Lord Shiva passed by the same way, looked at his daughter and fell for the beauty of her. He had his daughter by giving assurances. They had children and the children were imparted with many skills, Shiva said you live as a cognate kinsman and disappeared. Many Dombaru were born in this clan and received honors by showing their skills."[8]

In another town, at the open ground on the entrance of the towna tent was erected. The religious leader of the town looking at Dombara Chenni fell for her. Chenni told him that he should change his dress and become a Domba and rear donkeys. And the religious leader did as told. The king of the town did not see his religious leader and came in search and looked at the thrown away cloths and beads, the he sincerely begged him, The leader said that I do not have that capacity and suggested ask Chenni. King did going to Chenni Shiva looking at the faithfulness of all took them to Kailas. Therefore he said Domba clan is great.

**The Curse of Kumararama and Dombaru**

The great historical evidences of Dombaru is that incidents between Kumararama and Ratnaji. In the history of eloquence the poetries on Kumararama is the maximum, also Kumararama is the worshiping fellow in most of the regional vernaculars. Perhaps there is no other popular king like Kumararama in Karnataka. The Nanjunda poet has written 'Kumararama Charitha, Panchalaganga Chennarama, Mahalingaswamy Balarama on Kumararama. The poetic narratives on Kumararama are available in abundance across the State. Kumararama is very alive even to this day.The incidents that could have taken place between Ratnaji and Kumararama differs from folk to classical. In classical works like Kumararama charitha, Channarama and Balarama, Ratnaji of Dombara community has been depicted as the second wife of Kampila frantically trying to love Kumararama who in clan relationships happens to be the

son. When she fails in her attempts and decides to kill him thereby projecting her as villainess character.

But in folk and Burrakatha poetic narratives sung by Eramma there are different incidents of Ratnaji. In the folk poetry, it is Kumararama the first one to express his love and interest to marry Ratnaji. Kampila too is ready to marry Ratnaji. But Kampila looking at the astounding beauty decided to marry himself. His son was supposed to have married Ratnaji but deceiving him through the marriage to a sword makes her as his second wife. Both of them suffer. Kumararama being a price understands the disappointed love easily. For him the kingdom built by his father is more important. The girl he loved was married by his own father and he does not protest which reflects the feudalistic character. But born in the lower caste and living on her wishes Ratnaji does not accept the duped marriage.

``She keeps her love to Kumararama alive. The king is at liberty to marry any number; he can keep them in separate palaces and recruit servants. But no one has the right over the kingdom apart from the incarnated wife. The junior queens are only to be in the golden cage and reserved for enjoyment. Ratnaji hails from liberated Dombaru community. She naturally opposes the coldness of Kumararama and the cheating of Kampila. She wants Kumararama since she has loved him at any cost; hence she tries to get him. When her wish has not fulfilled she explodes the feudal system that has taken away her freedom. Again it is Ratnaji at the receiving end of the curse and defeat. Kampila listening to Ratnaji orders to cut the head of Kumararama. The head part goes to sky and declares that each drop of the blood that falls would take away the 'pallu' of Ratnaji and show her chest part, then disappears. Even to this day, the Dombaru girls dance in the street to satisfy Kumararama during *'Dombara Habba'* festival. Dombaru participate in this festival believing that this is a curse given by Kumararama. Dombaru justify the rituals of *'Devadasi and Dollu prastha'* of their community. They believe that the curse of Ratnaji has come to their clan."[9]

The poetry written by the classical writers depicts Ratnaji as villainy.

She is punished and immorally desires to have Kumararama. But in the folk, Ratnaji wants to have Kumararama as a female. Kumararama too loves her. Her love towards Kumararama cannot be measured as moral or immoral in the folk. Here the natural instincts come to the forefront. Ratnaji thinks that Kumararama belongs to her since she has loved him. Therefore, she wants to have him at any cost. This want is wasted because of Kampila and marrying her. Naturally this results in taking revenge for considering women as a commodity in the feudal system. ``The Classical poetry looks from the point of view of feudalism. They analyse Ratnaji with the concepts of purity and morality. The Classical poetries do not consider Ratnaji as a woman. Ratnaji is married to the King, once the girl is married irrespective of the situations she has to live with her husband.''[10] She has to fulfill her desires only through her husband; these perspectives have worked subtly in the classical poetry. Therefore, Ratnaji is villainy, in relationship with Kumararama was supposed to be the son and desired him hence she is immoral; therefore she is eligible to receive punishment. But the funniest part is that the incidents between Kumararama and Ratnaji must have happened long back but the impact of itcontrolling weirdly is seen in the present lives of Dombaru.There is prevalence of Devadasisystem among Dombaru community even in the present.

## Origin epic related to 'Yanadi' clan

There were seven brothers in one of the States. The elder's name is *'pasarapoli'* and the youngest one's name is *'ponnumalairaja'*. All the seven brothers go for hunting, they do not get anything instead they get only the egg of peacock, roots and tubers. They fry it in the fire, the elder asks whether they would like to carry it home or eat it there only? They say they will eat it there only and finish eating, but the youngest hides the' egg and tubers in his nail.

They come back home. The youngest says to his wife to spread her 'pallu'. He pushes the hidden egg and tuber in his nail, the pallu is filled and the wife eats it and goes to get water from the well, there the rest of six wives of her brother in laws too had come and they saw and ask what she was eating. She says that her husband got her the fried tuber and egg.

The wife of eldest told her husband. He gets angry and shares with rest of his brothers except the youngest, al the six brothers conspire to finish the youngest.

One day the King asks the eldest to get honey in turn he tells his brothers. Next day all of them are ready to go to the forest, the youngest while coming out of the door frame hit him, black cat passes through, the cobra rises its hood and passes through, the youngest do not bother with negativity goes to the forest with his dog. All of them meet at one place; the brothers lay down under a tree telling that they are not well.

Without getting disturbed the youngest finds creeper and makes it as a ladder, he worships the forest deities, also finds honey comb, he tries to take away the honey from it informing his brothers, the brothers waiting for this opportunity cut the creeper and the youngest falls into the valley and dies. The dog looking at this, barks and the brothers tries to kill the dog but it runs away.

``The brothers go back and the eldest brother molests the wife of the youngest. She escapes into the forest. The dog shows the way which was in the forest. She finds her husband's body and thinks to bury, meanwhile a vulture is on the way and agrees to take her to the bottom of the valley. In turn it asks for her sacred thread. She hands it over to the vulture. It is said that the neck is white because it wore the thread, from then on the 'Yanadi' women does not wear thread. Because of the influence in the present they have started wearing the thread. She piles up the wood and buries the body, she weeps, listening to this, Parvathi and Parameshwara come down to her and make her husband alive. They disappear after fulfilling their request."[11]

The husband and wife come back and establish a kingdom. The brothers sell fuel wood for their living. The youngest who built the kingdom like this is considered as their first person among 'Yanadi'.

**Origin epic of Gamokkalu**

``Ravana brings 'Atmalinga' from Shiva with his devotion. The linga which was to be installed at Lanka somehow was installed at Gokarna by

Ravana. When the Brahmins were invited for worship before them the Gamokkalu had come sprinkling the urine of the cow. The Brahmins were appointed as priests at Gokarna, they are the Gamokkalu. Later the Brahmin wanted to get married. He could not get Brahmin bride there. Then he said he would marry bride from Gamokkalu. Gamokkalu said they too wanted to give the bride to them, but we do not bathe every day, we eat the left overs, we wear the saree in different form and tie the hair at the back. If you allow our bride to follow all the above said, we have no objection for the marriage. The Brahmins agreed and married the bride. The 'havyaka' was born from the bride of Gamokkalu and the Brahmin groom. There are some more historical facts about the relationship between the Havyaka, Gamokkalu and Halakki community."[12]

**Origin Epic of Lambani:**

``A seed was sown in the sky by god. A girl was born from that seed. The sweat of the girl gave birth to a boy. She had sexual desire, the boy rejected. One more boy was born, he too rejected her offer, subsequently the third boy was born and he accepted. They had intercourse and the first person was born and many were born afterwards. Karna son of Kodwaja is one among them. His son was Kachapa. The sons of Kachapa were Theeda and Chada. The children of Chada were urbanites. Nathadad, Joshadad, Khimad, Mota and Mola were the children of Theeda. The son of Nathadadbelonged to carnivores' clan, he depended on hunting. Joshadad's children became Jogi. Kimadad gave birth to blacksmith clan, Moda gave birth to Banjara and Mola gave birth to Lambani clan."[13]

Lambani belongs to Wali and Sugreeva clan. Among the five sons of Theeda, bola is one of them and an ardent devotee of Krishna. He did not have children for a long time. He was an expert in dance and music. When Krishna had gone leaving Radha alone at Gokul, she appointed bola as her servant. They used to perform the dance and music together since both of them were exponents. Appreciating the skills of these two thekings asked them what they wanted.They asked for a child, the king blessed them with one of his son. Later the son became the first person of Rathod clan. Again they performed at Bhanogad durbar and got one more child. Later he

became the first person of Pawar clan. They got one more child from the King of Jangathagada and he became the first person of Chauvahan clan.

Mola was happy with three children; he was worried about their marriage. Once he enquired a Brahmin when he was rearing the cows. In turn the Brahmin shared his helplessness for not getting his three daughters married. Mola suggested having three daughters for his three sons. He brought the Brahmin girls despite being a Kshatriya or warriors. The generation from them is Rathod, Pawar and Chauvahan.

There were small kingdoms around Aravali hill range. Lakhansingh, son of Rathod of Khyragadh, son of Munjina Pawar, Lohasingh Pawar and Randhirsingh Chauvahan son of Toorigadh went for hunting along with the King Kavarapala of Delhi. During the hunting they saw a beautiful girl alone and started to trouble her. Looking at this the Delhi King punished them to be in isolation. They accepted the punishment meted out along with Bhavaprasad (cook) son of Pandava Prasad. They came to 'Khodapalli' in search of food. From there they came to Rakhoba ghats. They came to know Nath Laban there. They stayed with his hospitality. They were married to girls looking like Naga Brahmins. The generation from Lakhansingh became Rathod, the generation of Lohasingh became Pawar and the generation of Ranbirsingh became Chauvahan.

Before the rule of Moghal small dynasty was ruling. Ranaprathapsingh of Rajput clan was one among them. He was holding parts of Delhi and Rajasthan. Meantime the moguls invaded 'udayapura' of Ranaprathapsingh. Knowing that he cannot face Akbar, Ranaprathapsingh ran away to 'Haladighat'. Many of the patriots too went with him. Akbar attacked there too. Ranaprathapsingh was defeated at 'Haladighat' war. Akbar sent a word saying if he surrenders he would give half of his kingdom. But being a self respectful man Ranaprathapsingh denied the offer and went into the forest. Many families joined him. Akbar gave lot of trouble to Ranaprathapsingh to defeat him. The Rajput believing that the order of the King is the ultimate faced innumerable troubles. Finally Ranaprathapsingh accepted the defeat.

Marwadi, Gurjar and other Rajput communities have migrated to

towns because of the harassment from the moguls. Many families stayed back in the forest, later they were called as Lambani.

## Origin epic of Illiga: Mythology on community

``Shiva gave one bag full of money to people who were backward living in the forest. There were golden coins and one silver coin in the bag. Gusty wind was blowing; he brought the bag and opened it to the wind. Except one silver coin rest of it went in the air. This person thought Shiva has deceived him; he has given all fake and only one real and he took the one coin to a trader, Told him what he did, in turn the trader asked where you have thrown the rest of it show me the place. The golden coins have spread all over; he piled all the coins and said you take this beaten rice. Shiva watching all this felt again this fellow went wrong, let me help him out and brought several high quality cattle along with one dwarf and the horn was also short. Shiva called our people and asked to take the cattle which ever they like. He went near and inspects the cattle that were so silky and the horns were sharp and elegant. He selected the dwarf and shot horned cow since then our cattle are dwarf and short horns. Shiva once again felt that this caste went wrong and he created women. Shiva told to our person to select the women he liked. They were so beautiful and this poor guy felt if they hit me so looked at the end and there was one woman withswarthy complexion standing with the hair spreading all over. He brought her, therefore, our women always are dark, running nose and untidy hair. Shiva felt these people have failed even this and created roots and tubers. In olden days the roots and tubers were available just by lifting the creeper. Shiva called Illiga and said take out two creepers and there was abundant root, he put fire next to it on a rock and fried the tubers. Shiva said I will be back freshening myself till then you collect and keep the tubers that are fried. This Illiga thought himself that no one can see him and took the good tubers to hide in the holes of the rocks. He waited for Shiva with the small pieces of tubers. Doesn't he know being a creator, he asked what did you with the tubers? What can he say? Shiva then cursed saying despite trying hard you do not get sufficient tubers. Therefore, we are poor."[14]

## Origin epic of Hasala

``Seethe after separating from Srirama was in the custody of Valmiki. There she gave birth to Lava. Once she went to the river to wash the clothes. Monkeys were drinking water; she thought it is not a good sign, thought of the child leaving alone in the ashram. Meantime, Valmiki saw the situation and felt what Seethe could feel. He took a slit of plant turned it into a baby with life and made it to sleep in cradle. A few minutes later seethe came along with lava. She saw a baby playing in the cradle. Valmiki realizing the mistake said 'all this happened because of you', rear the child along with your son. They named the baby as 'kusha'. Hasala claim they are the generations of kusha. They justify their name *'hasla'* since they have born from the hand. During the fight against Rama, both lava and kusha fought valiantly with bow and arrow, hence they have also been called as *'Billakshatriya'*. Rama and Laxman alsoused bow and arrow, therefore they are also known as *'Ramakshatriya'*. Since they have born in the forest they have also been called as *'Hadiyoru'*. They were the power centers during Ramarajya."[15]

Hasala say they are relatives of Medar. *'Honnappa'* the first person of Hasalaand *'Chennaiah'* the first person of Medar are brothers.Therefore, Hasala considers Medar as their cousins. But Medar does not approve this argument. They have also not accepted that 'Chennaiah' as their first person.

Hasala narrate a story to confirm their relationship with Medar. Long back a Hasala created a material from bamboo. Then the Medar using the same material created two out of it. A quarrel took place between them. Medar ran away with knife. Hasala followed but he could get only the handle of the knife. The knife remained with Medar. Even to this day the Medar do not use the knife with handle. Hasala does not engrave 'trishul' on their knife. There is difference between Medar and Hasala in carrying the bamboo.

*'Honnaiah'* is the cultural hero of Hasala. He erected a pillar at Balligave in shikaripura taluk. People appreciating his braveness felt to pour gold on him, they came near to him saying 'take gold Honnaiah', but Honnaiah mistook as they are approaching to catch him and ran away into the forest.

There he lived a saintly life and Hasala think he is the contemporary of Basaveshwara, Cheluvadi Chennaiah, Madara Haralaiah, Madivala Machaiah, Kumbara Gundaiah.

Historically Hasala do not have the war tradition. But at Theerthahalli and Mudigere there are stories related two brave men 'Balamudda' and 'Balakalal'. Once upon a time the 'Bale' and 'Byra' kings were ruling the Tulunadu. They were attacked by powerful enemies. The 'mudda' and 'kalal' said if they are given the bow and arrows they would make the enemies to go back. The kind sent them with all the soldiers. Both of them were successful in sending back the enemy. The enemies suffered a great loss. The brothers slept in a temple on way back from the war. Like a miracle, the head and body of kalal was separated by morning. King said to cover the head with golden plate. Later 'mudda' also died while watching 'Kambala'. They became eternal 'bootha' and it became the responsibility of 'nalike' to satisfy these 'booths' that has perpetuated.

## Origin epic of Malekudiya

``Once Shiva decides to come to the earth, Parvathi pleads Shiva that she would accompany him, despite Shiva telling that you are woman and you have seen the sufferings of people there. But Parvathi demands that she would come and in turn Shiva says that he cannot come back until he completes the responsibilities. Finally both of them come to the earth. When they descended it was the time that Parvathi had delivered 'Shanmukha'. They went out leaving the child there. When they sat on a mountain, Parvathi felt her breast is enlarging since it was time for her to feed the new born and she said to Shiva that 'she has to go'. Shiva objects and says I did tell you not to come, now you want to go, I cannot come without completing the work. Meantime, Parvathi could not tolerate and said to Shiva to do something; Shiva didn't know what to do. Parvathi saw the sweat on Shiva and said to create a baby with life from his sweat. Shiva did. Parvathi fed the child and left the child to sleep. Parvathi said that we will take the child along with us; Shiva objected and said that child is born on earth; we cannot take the child to Kailas. It was imminent for them to make necessary arrangement for the child to survive, Shiva used

to carry a copper bowl to collect water when he was touring, he gave the tip of the bowl to the lips of the child and blessed that let the water not be empty until you are grown up."[16]

The child grew. Again Shiva visited the earth and looking at the growth of the child blessed him to collect roots and tubers as his staple food from the hills. Parvathi asked what Shiva has done to the child and Shiva replied but she insisted that the boy should live like others and let the boy cut the forest and go for shifting cultivation.

After some time Parvathi said to Shiva that he has come to age. Therefore, they created a girl and married and said that let them do service to us. They stayed in the hill and Parvathi became Chamundi of the hill to protect them. Therefore, Male kudiyas go wherever there is god's work.

There is another story on how they got their name Male Kudiya. When Parvathi fed the child from her breast thought of giving a name to the child and both Shiva and Parvathi decided that let the child be called as 'Mole Kudiya' since she has fed the child. But over a period of time it became Male Kudiya.

As they developed several clans were born. Some of them came to the towns while others stayed back in the forest.

Like in any other communities, there was a priest for Male Kudiya. That was the period of truth. The priest used to tell them that no one should lie, cheat and there was no problem for anything. Mean while all the other caste people came together and 'Kaliyuga' too started. There was no place in Kaliyuga for truthful people. He disappeared saying that you people live as you wish in the present, I won't come until this epoch is completed, then on all the rituals of Make Kudiya were stopped.

Male Kudiyas when they were on the hills, if a house is constructed they can live in that only for three years, it means there is no threat for three years; and they used to construct a new house after three years. If any death occurs soon after taking out the corpse the family of the deceased has to go for new construction, no rituals related death used to perform there and all the rituals were done in the forest (as told by Ganapa Male Kudiya).

**Origin epic of 'Byra'**

"1. A Muslim who was destroying the generations of Byra comes behind a young girl. She requests the dhobi for help. The guy identifies the girl despite hiding her in heap of clothes. When enquired the dhobi says she is her daughter. He doubtingly said if you say so then both of you must eat in one plate. She agrees and gets huge banana leaf and serves food separately on either the side. She took water from the bowl and made it to flow in the middle of the leaf. They sat facing each other. The king did not understand, the flowing water became stream and separated as two banks. She won and the Byra girl was rescued. She became the reason for Byra generation. Even to this day, the Byra community remembers dhobi during marriage and the Byra people call the girls of dhobi as mother.

2. The elder sister was looking through a hole while the procession of bridegroom for her sister was on the way. Those who saw her said she is looking through the hole. Later her children were called as 'Kandikaru'. The younger sister children were known as 'Byras' but there is no commonality between them.

3. There was a king separately for Byra people. While he was on throne, the people on the right side of him used to give right answers. This lead to two divisions among Byras - right line and left line. "[17]

**Origin epic of Kunchi Korava**

Several myths are there regarding the origin of Korava. This is also applicable to one of the sub sect Kunchi Korava.

1. To know the depth Parvathi's meditation Shiva disguise himself in several ways among them was the dress Koravanji. The continuation of Koravanji is Korava.

2. To test the meditation of Arjun, Shiva came in the form of 'Kiratha' while Parvathi wore as the female of the same. That female is known as 'Koravi' and the continuation of her siblings are Korava according to another myth.

3. Once Parvathi filled the snake stomach with very valuable pearls and gave it to Medar to make a cradle. The Medar was afraid with sound of pearls. Parvathi then handed it over to a 'Koracha'. He slit the snake like a bamboo and prepared the cradle. Satisfied with the work Parvathi gave him a winnowing fan and a magical stick. Therefore, the Korava women narrate the stories.

4. When Dharma raja was in exile, a girl loved him disguising as a story teller. Her generation is thus became Korava according to one of the story in Mahabharata.

5. The story of Krishna disguising as story teller woman to test Satyabhame is famous, the continuation of Krishna Koravanji is called as Korava in Bhagavatha.

6. There is a Tamil story prevalent resembles the story of Bhagavatha. "Venudu, the son of Agneshwathu who descending directly from Brahma ruling the earth, died without any heir for throne. His corpse was protected. The seven planets jointly had a meeting how to go further? Finally they created an organism from the right thigh of Venudu. They did not succeed since his face and body was distorted and was unfit to sit on the throne. The planets created another organism from his right shoulder. He was very able and was made to sit on throne with a name 'Pruthu' emperor. Disappointed with this the other organism 'Nishudu' asked the god why he was created? The god said the throne is already occupied and you can only rule the forest. Thus he gave birth to Boya, Chenchu, Yagadi and Korava. Only the Boyas are the legal children and rests were irreligious children. They were waiting to know who gave birth to them called themselves as 'Yerakala'. [18]

## Origin epic of Agera

### 1. Siva-Parvathi

In one of town four Agera stone cutters were engrossed in their work. Every day they cut stone and take the wages. Despite the hard they

were unable to get more than 20-25 rupees. God has given such an agony to them.

One of the afternoons they each of the four opened their boxes and ate *'ganji'* while discussing in general. Meantime, Siva and Parvathi were touring in the sky. Parvathi could not tolerate the agony of these poor people and said to Siva that 'we go to the earth and see the life of these stone cutters'. Siva said no, no each one has to suffer according to their fate, they had enjoyed in the last birth and now they are struggling. Parvathi somehow brought Siva who disguised as an old man.

Both Siva and Parvathi were passing through the way where Agera were sitting. One of them said 'look the girl going with the old man is so beautiful'. Another one said 'yes, when they pass this side again we will block them'.

Siva and Parvathi heard the dialogue. Parvathi angrily cursed them "We came here looking at their agony but see their adamancy, let them live and die like this, whatever they earn let it not be saved". That is why our Agera never come up.

Shiva and Parvathi were touring the universe when it was created. They feel bad looking at the silence on the earth and create a man and a woman before disappearing. After a long gap they come to know both the man and woman have grown up but living like brother and sister, hence are married. They gave birth to six male and six female babies. The Primal woman worships Shiva and marries the children. They were touring the universe with her elder brother. On the way one of the brother eating sweets on a leaf and he is cursed to live like a 'baluri'. They move on, another brother finds a piece of iron and makes it as a knife. The elder brother curses the boy to live like a potter in the open. The one more brother hunts an animal and he is cursed to live like a hunter and another is cursed to be a Lambani by selling the fuel wood, and one more brother takes the hair to catch a bird and he is cursed to be a Hakki - Pikki and as they go further along with the capital of his brothers they become Marwari.

## Origin epic of Pardhi

With this backdrop the Pardhi community identifies its clans in a different way. The people who speak Pardhi as their language have another story.

One fox comes to eat a sheep calf. The calf says eat me after I have grown up. The fox accepts and comes back after six months and asks shall I eat you now, 'the calf says now I am putting on weight, you can have me after six months'. After six months the calf has completely grown up has learnt the wrestling. The fox returns after six months and says 'shall I eat you now'. The sheep says 'come, what do you think self, have you reared me, are you not ashamed' hits at the fox. The fox being old runs away. While the Pardhi sing this it underlines that the exploiters can exploit to a limit, then it is like what Marx says Negation of Negations which loses at one stage giving birth to a new stage. Further it rejects that stage too and tries for a new one. It is a state transforming from quantitative to qualitative.

A similar kind of another story is that of Kanmaulya. Kanmaulya and his wife Sonachandi are nomads. They had two children and get to know a hunter. The hunter was supposed to give his hunt to the King. The hunter feels relaxed after the introduction of Kanmaulya. Every day he hunts and the hunter takes the hunt as if he has hunted to the king.

Once Kanmaulya going on the contour, he heard 'you, the eyes of a vagina, if you are a good hunter, catch me'. But Kanmaulya does not bother goes further. He do not get any hunt for the first time in his life, returns to the hut with disappointment.

The next day it repeats. This time he goes near the sound and finds a ant hill of with monitor and covers entrance with stones. The next day when he comes, the monitor requests him and he removes the stones, he then catches the Monitor.

The monitor says that act as I say, you keep the tail, nails of the four leg and the face with you, I will be of help to you whenever you are in need. Kanmaulya did as told. A wrestler comes to the kingdom and invites

everyone to fight with him. He defeats everybody and again invites for more wrestlers. Meantime, the king knowing the situation makes an announcement that whoever defeats the wrestler would be given half of the kingdom. While Kanmaulya comes on the way, the wrestler is beating with chain. Immediately from his side bag the monitor says the eyes of vagina, press the chain, Kanmaulya refuses to do so. Again the monitor assures he is with him and tells him to press the chain, the wrestler falls down, astonished and invites Kanmaulya for wrestling giving one week time. Kanmaulya eats healthy food and stands in wrestling box in front of all.

### 3.3. Stories

In the so far published only a handful biographies of nomads are found. The rest of it is focused on the cultural insights centered on the tribal artists and putting communities face to face. Therefore, it is imminent to evaluate the oral poetic narratives and origin epics of these communities.

The autobiographies establish both the individual as well as community. Simultaneously it records the individual or artist with density of experience. But the commune base of the tribal is not found in the so far published books.

Ex. It can be observed that while singing *'Deshingaraja'* among Budgajangama, the sub narrative about the friendship with Muslim friend and exposing the sharing of hunt and rituals involved in the tribal communities. It is a significant characteristic of narrating the story of Balanagamma and her acute poverty with children and also when they are thrown out of the house by her in law, the search for roots and tubers in the forest exposes the starvation of both the story and the actual life of the singer. The expression is possible among the performing art communities, let it be among Shillekyatha, Sudugaadu siddha, Dombidasa or Sindhollu.

The *'hagaluvesha'* or fortune telling among Budgajangama the comedian not only entertains the crowd also tells about their present social situation.

People listening and watching the characters in the stories of

*'Nallthangi'* and Balanagamma while begging for their orphan children donate generously out of kindness.

Filling stomach is an inevitable existenance of life. Without having any of the civilised characteristics or having land or settlement, it is difficult to expect any sort of artistic consciousness from the nomads. The artist though singing fabulously but the costume tells the sordid story of him.

The question of critic does not arise since the folklorists look at the performance and the arts of nomads with a preoccupied notion. The Scholars do not even look at the art and performance of these people holistically. The involvement, singing, acting, spot poetry or story building depends on the mindset of the artist. Some time it keeps mum the entire town but it all depends more on psychological state rather than the economic state.

The communities singing these kinds of narratives contain mythological and social situations but it becomes a crawling path nomad not the development of individual. There are several historical incidents among the Hakki Pikki songs. Though they are part of Pardhi community because of customs and language they claim they are different. It is curious that though they are aware that they are part of Pardhi community, but the class consciousness and still living primitively without any reforms makes the Hakki Pikki community to say categorically that they are different.

But the Pardhi sing excellently their songs say that they came from north towards south for political reasons. The Lambani too recollects like this through their songs. The invasion of Moguls made the Rajputs to run away, the communities like Pardhi, Lambani, Ghisadi and Bylapathar who were supplying arms and ammunition too ran in all directions.

The strange fact is that Ranapratap simha who worshipped Naukkad deity has been shifted to Yelukolaga Yellamma. With the curse of husband though attacked by leprosy and bathing in nine well the curse is gone. The moguls trying hard to impose Islam do not succeed and could not attack the place of the deity. At one stage even Akbar is defeated in front of Yellamma deity. Then dadaji an ardent devotee of Akbar gives an idea. He

provokes him to spit on two well - Devakonda and Surjakund. The bad insects and nauseating smell makes the deity to go from the place. Therefore Rana is defeated without the support of deity. But the worriers Patha and Jamul die bravely. Rest of them goes into forest without subjugating to Muslims.

The people who went forest are Pardhi, Neershikari, Melshikari and the hunters of deer Hakki Pikki. After the Guru Byranatha the next is Jamal or Jamal Patho. The Pardhi sing this memory even now. This is historically and politically important while singing the origin epic of them. While singing they highlight their sincerity towards the King, God and the community. Singing is the only alternate to forget the tragic nomadic life.

The once spent luxury and the present heinous situation through songs have been retained by some of the nomad communities. We can see this among Pardhi, Lambani and Gondali.

This might give pleasure to the elders but for the youngsters it rings the history and educates them about their oral tradition.

In the songs of Gondali they express the friendship between Shivaji and Shahuraja and being sincere to the King by spying against the British.

The Lambani who are well off in the present narrate the cultural text containing the history with minute details. Even to this is being sung in their 'thanda'.

The oral narratives and origin epics of tribal communities can be used as references while documenting or studying the history of nomad communities.

The study of performing arts, handicrafts, occupation related to religious along with animal husbandry and hunting, most of the communities narrating their origin epics inclusive of sub stories, myths, generations we can identify a common thread of collectivism.

The songs that have flown through the generation from their memory but, the period of labeling as criminal tribe, leaving in the outskirts of towns and villages in hide and far from the mainstream is cruelest that

shatters the romanticism. For Ex. The rule of going to the police station on new moon day has been followed even to the last decade. The communities that have suffered vigorously has been taken seriously by the Indian Scholars, that is very sad.

In the overall published writings of the Sociologists, cultural thinkers, literates we do not find the details of nomadic culture.

This is not detail information of one community rather it is the sad story of all nomadic groups in general, south India in particular. There is still a dichotomy in availing the benefits as per the constitution and the least identity.

The mindset of reading main stream readings in the conventional system, the biographies of Dalit nomads creates new sensation.

'Government Brahman' by Arvind Malagathi, 'Urukeri' by Siddalingaiah, 'Menegara' by Tumbadi Ramaiah and 'Samboli' by Laxman are some of the prominent biographies in Kannada literature.

The biographies that are published in Marathi like 'Uchalya', 'Akkaramashi' by Sharanakumar Limbale, 'Gabaala' by Mullarisab More and among the women writers 'Jini Amache' by Baby Kamble reflects the life of nomads and Dalits.

'Dushkal', Rangabhoomi, Samvadache swarup, Vimuktha and 'Andharachevarasudar' keeps open the slum life of nomads.

Gondhaliga, Sind Madiga, Budgajangama, Sudugaadu Siddha, Shillekyatha, Dakkaliga and Durumurugi communities have not come under the purview of studies. Especially, the Madari (snake catchers), Karadi Kalandar, Chappar Bhand, Parvatha Mallaiah Kanjarbhat, Ghisadi, Bylapathar, Rajagonda, Gosangi and Dungrigharasiya communities have not been studied. It is not improper to say that the situation of these nomadic communities and also the ignorance of the main stream educational system are the reasons.

After the organisation of nomad communities in Karnataka, the communities were awakening. This awareness has lead to the alliances by

the National leaders of the nomads and also organising of communities in the respective States at the National level have paved the way to know about the communities and also a dialogue has been established with people like Balakrishnarenuke of Maharashtra, Ganesh devi of Gujarat, Chintalayadagiri, Pastam Yadaiah, N.R. Venkatesh of Andhra Pradesh and also National leader of Hakki Pikki community Meenapatni, National leader of Bovi(stone cutters) community Subbarao became the reason for organising nomadic communities in Karnataka.

In the way of studying nomadic communities of India we need to consider origin epics, other literature of these communities like Budgavaani of Budgajangama published in 1975 in Andhra Pradesh, 'Ghumanthu' in Maharashtra and other researchers.

## 3.4. Poetics

### The Poetic narrative of Kalingaraya

The following details would substantiate to understand oral poetic narrative of Kalingaraya poetry sung by Smt. Chowdamma and group.

Arasakathuri and Madarambi pleading Shiva to overcome the situation of infertility are like the prayer of women who are abused of infertility.

"Let born in the evening and die in the morning
Please take out the word infertile
Let born now and die
Please take out the word infertile"[19]

The intention of making the character of 'channamma' as immortal as she is married with the corpse of Kalingaraya. The soliloquy of girls is the extension of imaginary with other details of the poverty stricken communities.

### Poetry of Gadripalanayaka of Myasabeda

Gadripalanayaka leading life by rearing cattle at gosikere kaval he makes agreement with tiger. The agreement is that the tigers will not disturb and Gadripalanayaka and his family do not hurt tiger anyway.

The tiger cubs disturb the cattle by biting. During that time the children from Gadripalanayaka side kill the cubs. Realising the mistake and breach of agreement and also the fear of tiger may destroy his clan, Gadripalanayaka along with kith and kilns migrate to 'Mincheri' and people call this place as 'Gadrinele'. Finally Gadripalanayaka and the eldest tiger die in the battle.

There is a belief that like this many more died because of the curse of trigger and a statue of tiger is worshiped.

"He promised the tiger and killed the children of tiger
He is braver than tiger - Palaiah
Died in front of tiger
Finger millet, finger millet worship
It is a new worship constructed by raya - palaiah
How generous he is...."[20]

## Oral poetry of Gondhaliga

Gondhaliga are the highest cultural ambassadors' community. They sing in various forms and reach out the masses through their imitable oral tradition.

Do not need pearls, gold and richness
No need for the luxury of fort around - let
Folk be there in our state around.

The gratitude is expressed to the communities that are taking care of them.

"I will tell you the pain of my heart
I will tell you the pain of the family
I will get rid of trouble
I will think of clan to overcome"

Despite being in the street but consoling others about social life is the mind of social doctrine.

Among the several poetic narratives of Gondhaliga, the story

Kalingaraya, Ratnavathi, Mynavathi and Neelakumar, story of Lakshapathi, the story of Punda Dattaji, Gunasagari highlights the social systems.

'Carry the name Gondali
Feelings of all is yours 'Maya'
Getting up early in the morning and freshening
Covering with shawl and dhoti
Creating sound when speak
Thus budi budikanna...came'[21]

(Higgina Buggi, Mysore education department, K,V, Puttappa, 1979)

'Wandered from town to town, from lane to lane
The worry of filling belly did not leave
Why do you grapple with caste, caste?
We have no caste in the world
The king of this land does not have power"[22]

(Gilikanda Kugyave, N.N.Sannakki)

The hand of giving
The hand of generosity
The right hand has bent - Muniyavva
Donate generously with full hand"[23]
(Yellavva Gondali)

In each song they make you to understand the existenance of their life.

## 3.6. Poetic Narratives

### The Poetry of Kambojiraja

This is oral narrative of Krishna Golla. The perception of folklorists about the state is said this poetry in many ways. Eramma while singing this song has retained the importance like life saving water. This is an example how a cultural ritual was important to life during the rule of chamaraja.

The day 'Ugadi padya'
One day you have to go out from town
Wander wherever possible
Let tiger, bear
Rabbit, catch them and bathe them
Decorate with garland
Beating the drums
Go in a procession on the town.

The classical mind cannot even imagine the life centric perception of this poetry. The honey is taken out in particular period by Jenukurubas. Soliga do not hunt the pregnant animal. Adivasis do not cut the tender plants and leaves. From these Adivasis Eramma of Budgajangama has shown the love of her community towards the animal and plants. Further the idea of making a book beyond words is significant. Bringing the animals in procession and highlighting the non violence thus is the procession of life. But the Chamaraja going with this intention kills the pregnant Kamadevi and he will be cursed by her. The impact of which is narrated in a simple way by Eramma.

Look Gopapa
Life goes on
Has killed the being
Leaving the creation

Untimely death of Chamaraja, the son Kambojiraja is taken by his mother Neelavenidevi. As he studies Eramma with her tribal instinct says

If you study more you will be mad
The mind will spoil if you study more

This is a mockery of telling the educated who are from the bottom level communities. Being educated and showing back to their communities is impact of modernisation, since the behavior and concerns of the educated results in the class consciousness.

The food is the main life saver and same has become the conflict of

poor and backward classes. The lines of these from Eramma have become the philosophy of farmers even to this day.

Making a hole in the finger millet ball

Bake the chili and brinjal and put garlic to make chutney.

This poetry introduces the enormous humanity of the lower strata communities about the food against the thoughts of priestly class.

Kambojiraja marries the seven daughters' viz. Mankannadevi, Modeldevi, Giridevi, Ratnadevi, Suramma, Sunkammadevi and Siridevi of Gollara Chithappa.

All the seven wives do not conceive. To overcome from the curse the remedies shown are centered on the traditional knowledge of the lower strata communities. The working culture that makes more humane has been elaborately narrated. Kambojiraja and his seven wives have been made to get into the hardship.

"You and the seven wives

Has to take

Seven baskets for seven wives

You need seven pots

Three roads leading to three towns

Put three 'vananthra'

Dig a pit up to the knee level

Go on sowing seed

You must get boils in your hand holding the instrument

The drops on the face (sweat) should fall on the ground

The seed in the soil should sprout

Then allow the plant to grow

It should flower or blossom

Do not sell the fruit

The plant should bend

The plant should naturally fall down

The smell of it should go beyond seven seas

Birds should come"

The entire poetry feels the earth and its evolution. Today the human being is deserting the earth and has no about the rate of exploitation. Kuvempu in one of his poem

Slitting the neck of a tender flower
And put that to a lifeless idol or stone
Oh priest.....

If you comparatively understand the above and the Eramma's love towards nature and Kuvempu's love towards nature is one and the same and our researchers do not even discuss these things. The conflicts in the tragic plays of Greek and Jagalurajja and Gadripalanayaka though seems one and the same, the native tradition and constructing native history has been intentionally neglected.

"The remedy for the curse for Kambojiraja
Walk day and night
Without chappals
Without the shadow of umbrella
Without the horse
Leave your ill things
And come to Tirupathi"

The Eramma community walks like this to understand the world reveals the tradition like this. Kambojiraja following this goes to pilgrimage. He constructs houses and Matt. The mother dies in his absence. Finally with the boon from Vishnu he gets six children. Because of his six wives mischievous, he keeps his youngest wife siridevi on the death bed in a graveyard. Siridevi's son Karabandharaja shows braveness. At last he comes to know the history of his family tree. He clears his father's wound and brings the parents together.

Listen your husband is bad
He is sent to heaven only because of his wife

The kindness and excusing nature of Siridevi makes the Kambojiraja to be ashamed. This is in fact a win of the feeling of women.

The moral feelings of the community and aspirations of the tradition has been perpetuated in all the oral poetic narratives sung by Eramma.

Seventy seven snakes of all kinds
Was stolen by Madeshwara and bundled them
Carried on his shoulder
Coming zig zag way look at our Shiva"

(Janapada Mahakvya, Maleya Madeshwara, P.K. Rajashekar)

These verses have inspired the communities to construct poetry with their experience. We can evaluate the nomadic communities' poetic narratives as an example. In the poetic narratives of Dakkaliga

``This earth is ours
This water is ours
You took away this land which was yielding the crops
The thread is ours
Slitting neck of the cow and sharing
We put it under a plant
You wore it by stealing
Reddy is ours and also the Gowda
The vyshya are our son in law
Brahmins are our relations to our family
The worshiping is ours and the temple
The priest is our son of the house
The Jumbo Island is ours
The king jumbo fruit is ours
These are eyelids of Heppu saint
Give the donations and taxes
Listen to the blessings of Dakkaliga"[25]

The worldly view of this can be analysed juxtaposing the communities that have been denied in the hierarchy and memorizing the past and the present.

Among the Dombidasa, the poetic narratives have the nucleus of their life dreams as aspirations. The poetic narratives like 'Coolie Kempa', Maregowda and Krishna Koravanji we can see the expectations of the communities.

"You have not seen how
The house of Maregowda
With thousand pillars
He eats like a dog
He eats green leaves like a donkey
During the time of having liquid
A fly has come
And fallen in the liquid oh Shiva
The bad fly how much it drank the liquid"[26]

Only Dalit and nomads can construct these kinds of details. For them the main expectation of life is hunger and food. The communities who does not get this looks at the one who has food, house and the distance of class thus said like this;

Magical game of Sudugaadu Siddha
Gowda's domain is Chavadi
The snake play is in its ant hill
The monkeys play is in the tree
The saintly begging is with their collection box
If these were the truth
Then why should we have come here
Emptiness where there is miracle
Play, luxury and one day quit
(Virupakshappana Modiyata)

The Sudugaadu siddha reverbs their life in these kinds of philosophical sensibilities.

Burrakatha Eramma in her 'Marwadi shet' poetry narrates about the

family, wife and children, agriculture, poverty and money like Marx's consciousness.

"Make the king to fall down
We will slit his neck
.....
They have come to take life and they talk
What is the fun if they do not talk?
You have come like ghosts
Taken away the land and cattle
You have come like god....
.....
Leaving the town and come to a shelter
If kindness comes to stone
The earth calls
The house calls
The money calls the money...."

Eramma questions the way the rich get all they want.

Sindhollu community when they go for begging they highlight the aspirations of the community. Beating the body with whip and making the environment heart throbbing they sing in favor of society and life.

The Head: You have to be god, do not bring ill name to the community
Wife: (beating the drum) Bala Bela
Eldest of the Clan: do not do violence
Wife: Bala Bela
Eldest of the Clan: Save us and the village
Wife: Bala Bela
Eldest of the Clan: Do not trouble
Wife: Bala Bela[27]

We can perceive if the down trodden nomadic communities turn violent what would be the situation? This could be a reflection of his mind

when he whipping his body in front deity. This simultaneously responds to the priestly system, religious perceptions and the anger of helplessness, loneliness and hunger.

Oh, Dyami I have come to take out your eyes and put it on to your hand

Oh, Dyami, I came through your eyes
You sat in a temple where you cannot enter
Oh, Dyami I am your husband has come
You sit in the temple closing the doors
If there is truth in you come and put 'Angara' in my hand
If there no truth in you I put 5 bangles to your hand
I put the eyes of Potharaja on the ox
On your fair cut the cub
I cut and show the blood to you Dyami

(Ravulanagappa of Sindhollu community sang in the street)

**Poetry of Syasi Chinnamma**

Primarily Eramma belongs to Budgajangama community. They are shivites. The elite shivites used the nomad Budgajangama confining to the propagations of religion through literature.

Soon after the suppression of the Vachana movement, the swift political changes shattered the uniqueness of culture. Therefore, some of them went to place like 'shrishylam' is part of history. The tribal communities like Chenchu, Yerava and Yanadi around shrishylam were influenced by shivites culture. Vyshnava used the nomadic Dasa community like Chenna Dasa, Dombidasa for the propagations of their religion. They became untouchables standing in the street became nomads. Some of the social researches Budgajangama, Dasa, Sudugaadu siddha have blossomed from the stem of Madiga.

The significant point is that these communities did not live under the shadows of religion. Any rules of the priestly class do not bother the nomads. Primarily the primal communities were being the lovers of the

nature or the mother earth personifying the philosophy never made them to think of Vyshnava or shaiva, hence kept them free from this. The symbol of nature of Vyshnava and shaiva has used by Budgajangama. The 'Vibhuthi', Rudrakshi, Shivalinga, patri of Shaiva and from Vyshnava Tirupathi, Tirubhatamu, Gaganam, Teru etc. But the nomads go beyond these and go to their mother culture along with worshipping the power deities like Maari, Gali, Huligemma, Jamblamma, Saphalamma and others in their tents.

The main search of this writing is in identifying in the poetry of Syasi Chinnamma that Chinnamma is born from the boon of Venkataramana, and marries her in law's son Yangalareddy and after converting into shaivism but Eramma documents aspirations of herself and her community. Basically Eramma is nomad, marries Ramachandrappa of 'yedavali' clan and gives birth to a daughter - Bichamma. As a matter of fact polygamy is not an issue among the nomads. The families are intact till this day. Eramma's rivalry wife Kamalamma has nine children and even to this day they follow the traditional 'Hagaluvesha' around Siruguppa.

Eramma because of family problems leaves the house of the husband, comes to old daroji and makes singing as her profession. The songs are same sung by their ancestors. Although there is difference in language but the aspiration remains intact and that can be seen in the poetry sung by Eramma.

There is a difference in placing women in the mainstream society and the worldly view of the nomads. For nomads the female baby is the symbol of pride and the feeling of the rest of the Society is exposed in the present. Here the groom not only pays the bride price but also falls at the feet of the parents of the bride, on the other side the dowry system of the mainstream society. Therefore, Eramma express the inspirations of her community while singing the narratives.

Oh! God I do not have the female babies

To worship

To get clothes

From the other world

No one get these give me

The female babies

Give the richness of female babies to me.[28]

Eramma must have sung more than thousand times the poetry of Chinnamma but always the aspiration of the community is intriguingly expressed. The Lord Tirupathi Venkataramana as a spokes person of the culture

``Girls are difficult oh mother

I cannot see

Do not look at the troubles given

Girls are difficult

I cannot see''

As a response the couple Narasimha reddy begs for girl child

Oh!

You ask the seven male children

I can give another ten ...

There is no one to carry 'padaga' to

Tirupathi

No one to carry the pot and

No one to wave

No one to put mustard

Can the male children eligible to put mustard

No way

Mother

They carry the pots

For this the god helplessly reacts

I give the daughter

But whose karma is that when there is problem

The couple Narasimhareddy responds

Let the good and bad be on us

Give us the daughter

All the bad would go"[29]

Any narratives cannot be just fossils but it juxtaposes to the pressures of the present. Analysing the present with the past understandings and revaluating creativeness always keeps these kinds of culture alive. The biographers especiallythe talents of nomads always keep themselves for the criticism in their cultural expression. If this is dilemma for the modernists but for oral talents it is a mutual way

``Mylaralinga is too a linga

It is the linga of ten lives

The 'atmalinga' is the truthful

The truthful linga is not seen in the life

It is white inside, black inside

Not for those see white linga, take this white linga

If it is white, the Lingayat make it black

These are Lingayats

These are the onion lingayats ....."[30]

Eramma did not get formal education. She is born illiterate. She learnt these poetic narratives from their ancestors in her mother tongue 'marugu', and herself translated it into Telugu and into Kannada. She explains the religious base in a simple way life Manteswamy or Nareyanappa. It is interesting to know what kind of discussion must have taken place during their periods about the sensibilities of experientialism it reminds African Tribe. In the origin epic of Julu, Dinka of Keenya about the creation of earth and sky can be analysed.

``Who hold the fist, the hair is of husband

No one will get it is bald

He overrides the women in the nights

He kills the cat in the village

He rapes the women in the village

He eats the cat

Catches the cat"[31]

Eramma in her shaiva and Vyshnava poetry narrates the food culture of nomads. The audiences who listen are clear that Eramma is from nomadic community. Eramma's clan 'Jangala' is originally from the forest. They catch rats, squirrel, tortoise, Malabar squirrel and partridge, prepare them and enjoy life with wives along with toddy, the liveliness of these people can never dried up.

But without having organic relationship and jammed in the fantasy created by the colonials is leading in the disappearance of their language. Gogi questions all writers of Africa who writes in English. In his work "Colonialism and consciousness", he awakens the African writers those who have been living as slaves under colonialism, writing in European languages and suffering alien complexity. He condemns as escapism those who have shown back to their nativity. The Africa, Asia and also the Latin American countries simultaneously struck under the invasion of colonialism and their life is in stake, the mainstream people systematically pushing the native people to this fire through the representatives of colonials. To some extent it loses the originality, without any nuclear weapon, the native life style of rural India and the tribal life styles will completely wiped away in the organised conspiracy. If at all being Indians we can have relationship with African writers and people through literature and culture. They too like us have come from multi lingual, multi racial and multi religious background; they too have been ruled by the mono economic, culture and political powers of Europe, though we live separately but the sword is the same that wounded us.

Eramma narrates the food culture of the tribe not for help of narrative but to showcase the life of her own community and she does not have any inhibition about this.

The punishment meted out to Chinnamma by her in law Nagamma is a natural life of nomadic.Baraguru Ramachandrappa in his sub culture series explains the working culture in the classical mythologies and poetics that "the forests still tell the stories human beings, the banks of the rivers reveal the pulse of human in poetry, caves and huts have respire in different way, the human yet to construct a house has constructed his own world,

and innumerable people being in the village but not being the Adivasis, being outside but not becoming nomads are still have distinct culture".

The heirs of this land nomad do not collect food unnecessarily. They do not kill the animal when wife is pregnant, without the obligation of any established religion they worship nature in primal state. The self narrative of Gonda tribe of Odisha is like this;

``Salutation to you, mother jaher era
On the occasion of the Baha
Festival we offer you
Young fowls, fresh flowers
And freshly husked rice
We beg of you to accept it
With love and pleasure
We pray to you
We take these fresh flowers
and fruits
let there be no disease
and sickness from them
let not disease and pestilence
enter our village
bring us the rain - bearing clouds
in time and with abundance of rain
let the earth be fresh and green
by quickening the mind and
the body, bless everything with our life".[32]

The woman logging for security depends on the context of the situations. No other thing impresses her when she is with her beloved. But, Chinnamma's husband 'Yangalareddy' is the puppet in his mother's hand. The well becomes deserted for her.

Eramma being second wife did not enjoy her married life with

husband Ramachandrappa yedavali. The rivalry wife Kamalamma delivering nine children and finally the responsibility of rearing them falls on Eramma and makes her alone.

``What can I say now oh lord
I do not want to live lord
You are one gave life lord
You only take away the life lord
The who gave life should take away the life lord
They kept me in such a bad place lord"[33]

The tribal women have the freedom which the woman of the mainstream doesn't have. The prayer of Eramma makes all the gods to appear - Virupaksha of Hampi, Galemma of Hospet, Mylarlinga, Garadi Narasimha, Kanaka durgamma of Bellary, Yerrythatha of yamanur, Kolumaramma of Devalapura etc.

To meditate like this, the nomadic life has become oil for light. It is not an exaggeration that the places she wandered and her experiences are the primary material for her poetry and also the biography.

In Eramma's poetry the Kannada language seems to a learned one, since all her ancestors - the Budgajangama sang in Telugu. The nomads of Telugu origin went in search of food and remained as regional groupsbut the root of the clan has mixed socially. It may be natural for some castes but as an identity the cultural relations becomes important. In this context, the Burrakatha Eramma is an outstanding talent.

The semi nomads Kaadu Golla finds their culture and uniqueness in the poetries of Krishna Golla, in the texts that they have developed. The songs were sung by Banjgere Smt. Bhumanur Gowramma of Challakere taluk in Chitradurga district, Smt. Ullibadamma, Smt. Ajjimajjigola Gowramma and kuriyajjiyora sanna Eramma.

It is imperative that Kaadu Golla identifying themselves as nomads seems to be of political reasons. The settled tribe communities do not refuse the relationship of agriculture with the land. Still at the level of

being cattle rarer of this vast Country have all the characteristics of tribal community should not expect social justice from standing in the line of nomads who are scattered in the name of begging. It is not wrong to fight with the elite and get the social justice. But trying to get any sort of equality fighting with nomad is like stealing money from blind's plate.

Kaadu Golla, Myasabeda, nomadic Kuruba, Lambani, stone cutters (bovi vaddaru) is weaker than the Dalit communities. The velocity in social movement is slow, but not like hapless nomads. These communities have formulated cultural poetries and are far better since they have cow, ox and sheep like moveable assets and have a cover on the head have rich cultural background. Therefore it is a mine of oral tradition that attracts the classical scholars and the play by Kambara 'Chakori' can be said as a cultural celebration.

**The Cultural Hero of Kaadu Golla**

In the poetry of 'Yethaiah' there are several incidents and he has all the characteristics of a cultural hero. He is cattle rarer nomad. Being nomad the accumulation of knowledge is like this;

> ``You have seen 'Adavani' region Yethaiah
> You have seen 'sundur' region Yethaiah
> You travelled seven states that are surrounded
> But did not get a handful of grass to my cattle
> The cot of cattle is hard
> Snake is the pillow
> The bed is like rock with thorns
> The tears rolled drop by drop from Yethaiah
> Became a stream
> And falls down from the hillock''[34]

The life of Yethaiah is greater than any of the hero of the classical poetry. He protects tiger cubs along with the cattle, this still a symbol of motherhood in the rural life. The cattle rarer providing food to others without having shade or water is appreciable for his pride about the culture.

The classical history of this Country has deceived the cultural history of tribe and registers its cultural representation. But still the Kaadu Golla loves their cultural history and salutes its cultural hero;

``Inner stick boon stick
Four sticks outside
The Kaadu Golla
Taking his hand stick
Brave among the brave
To Bravery Junjappa
To mara muthappa
To teacher shithaiah
To guddadethaiah
To father marivanna
To mother shinnamma
To maranna playing on the cow
To Junjappa playing on the ox
Best wishes everyday wishes.''[35]

The communities who have awakened culturally do not give up their unity despite the communal confrontations and transitions. In the rituals of tribal the cultural consciousness always protected as fresh. The love towards native culture should not end up in the justification of caste and religion systems. The biggest challenge is that without losing the political consciousness of the present facing with the past and not losing the rationality and understanding the beliefs of the communities. While denying the upper and lower social discriminations, accepting the multi cultural and uniqueness of it.

Lambani folk stories edited by Somanna Hongalli reveals like fire in the oral tradition of them. Just to fill belly dreaming about delicious food and being in the hut dreaming about the palace is personified in innocence and is reflected in many of the narratives;

``There is nothing to construct and there is no breast to suck
Looking at the while bones telling to go that way

Left the white cloth in air

The he cow became the deer and the cow became she deer

Were flying

The boy Krishna joined 'maramane'

And three thousand cows were living happily in the forest"[36]

The jealousy of sister in law the educated brother turns into a dog in the stories of nomads since the husband was uneducated and no one wanted to take him for coolie, but everyone was showing interest in the brother since he has studied. With the help of magic she turns the brother into a dog. The husband beats the dog when it follows her while carrying food. Getting the beatings the dog runs away into the forest there too it is beaten. The dog comes near the palace where the princess declares that she throws a garland and on which it falls will be her husband and the garland falls in the neck of the dog and the dog the dog becomes the prince. The physically disabled and beggars who suffer from hunger and whom the country can take care is cursed.

It is historical farce that the educated becoming the cultural representatives while not believing with their blood relations. The learned Ambedkar is the sun for Dalit world, paradoxically the educated among the Dalit are showing back to their own communities is the harsh reality.

The dog marrying the princess is the win of hunger here. It looks like a soliloquy of the Lambani who cannot win the hunger. But the tribal encyclopedia details that the dog too has dreams. The State which uses the slogans like Social justice, equality and equal life has acute negligence towards these innocent dreams.

We see the god servants who reach to all through the biographies of the nomadic communities. Budgajangama in their origin epic believe toddy as gangi. Before the origin of human beings the five elements were created. The embrace of these elements lead to the origin of 'ohm'. From this word 'ohm' the power was born.

This power thus gave birth to Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara by 'mohini'. When she wanted to marry them, they refuse and say that they

would like to see her as god. Then the power in anger becomes the fire and churns, later the ash made into three divisions and the life is given that metamorphose into Lakshmi, Parvathi and Saraswathi.

Shiva and Parvathi came as tourists suffer from thirst. Then Shiva creates toddy tree and drinks it. The tree asks Shiva to create human who can drink toddy, thus the Ediga Gowda is born. The toddy drunk by Shiva has been used among the Budgajangama in all their ceremonies and they consider it as 'gange'.

In the origin epic of Hakki Pikki, the first person Nathar's son Vaagri was an ardent devotee of his deity and was pulling the deities chariot. Later the adopted children Kalanath and Byyanath were at the temple, she expresses the desire to tour the Country. When the devotees touch the old chariot it used turn as a flower chariot. Once to avoid the wheels of chariot to fall on the ground, the deity created a baby. The baby is the cultural hero of Hakki Pikki Parashurampur. Later the children of the clan Kalanath and Byrunath goes to drink water created by evil spirit near Amruthvadi. Meantime they pluck the fruits from the tree and in the confrontation the blood is flown and it flows with the rain. The clan deity 'birugali' follows the evil army. The children of the clan go helter and kilter. Parashurampur goes towards Gujarat, later this becomes Gujaratwala and then dividing into hundreds of groups thus the Hakki Pikki is born.

These nomads live as part of the nature and understand it on various levels. Even in the changing scenario these nomads identify themselves with animals, birds, plants and trees. This is a commune life and through the oral narratives has become individual paintings.

The nomads see their origin epic as their biographies and their cultural hero is seen as the representative of the deity.

As it is explained in the origin epic of Dombaru, a servant was with a woman, he tortured by hating another servant. The first servant without food and dress lead the life under a tree by begging.

He goes to beg in disguise as Domba and is not given permission to enter the town. As he is sad and weeps in front of the village, meantime,

Shiva passes through and immensely fallen for his daughter chenni for her beauty. He meets her and as she delivers the children they were given the skills and were blessed to live with their skills. Many Dombaru born in this clan and were recognised for their skills. A tent was erected in the ground of town, the head scholar (guru) of the king fell in love with chenni and request her to be with him. She says to take out the dress and rear the donkeys like Domba, he obliges. When the king looks at the dress of the 'guru' and begs for the blessings of him for which the guru says he cannot but tells him to ask chenni. The king went to chenni and begs herm Shiva appreciating their love takes all of them to Kailas. Therefore, Domba clan is great.

In the above narrative, the women liberation and equality has shown in a natural way. The Dombaru girl creates curiousness for the mainstream people, the guru taking out his dress and lives like a working class and accepting the values of the tribe manifest as decolonizing theory. As this narrative simultaneously does decastification and decolonize as Frantz Fannon states that

'Don't expect to see any explosion today
It is too early ..... Or too late
I am not the bearer of absolute
Truths.....
Things I am going to say, not shout
I have long given up shouting
A long time ago.....
I have to prove it
Striving for a new humanism
Understanding mankind
Our Black brothers
I believe in you, man
Racial prejudice

Understanding and loving, I am bombarded from all sides with hundreds of lines that try to foist themselves on me. A single line however

would be enough. What does man want? What does the black man want?

The poetry of Balanagamma edited by Dr. Cheluvaraju, the daughter of Rajaguthiraja Manikyadevi married as a second wife to Navabojaraja of Mandalagiri gives birth to Chandranagu, Suryanagu, Uttaranagu, Dakshinanagu, Veeranagu and balanagu. When her in law torturing these little ones Eramma weepingly sings

What hitting at the mouth of the poor
If you spoil it comes to your heart

Fannon how he reacts to Black race likewise Eramma explodes here on the basis of humanity.

There is not much oral literature like this. The aspirations of Marx are there in Balanagamma

The silver coins is fake
The gold has become bronze
Silver has become 'silavara'

The interesting aspect is that the priestly class has taken all the cultural of pride strategically in the name of protection. There is historical evidence of cheatingly taken away the temples in the forest and hills by the priestly class are there in the Colonial India. Before the advent of Veerashaiva, the original shivites like 'Nathapantha', Kapalika and Jogi are the heroes of tribal communities. Further it has changes because of acculturization.

The untouchables of Agricultural practices were 'Shakthas'. They were the worshippers of vagine cult. The other semi nomadic cattle rearing communities like Kaadu Golla, Kuruba and Beda communities were worshipping the pennies.

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# AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF NOMADIC TRIBES: A WRITTEN NARRATION

Gabala

Uchalya

Almariya Antharanga

Bayalabenneri

Akrama Santhana

Budganaadha

## Chapter 4

# AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF NOMADIC TRIBES: A WRITTEN NARRATION

The influence of Dalit Panthers of Maharashtra on the personal stories of Dalit writers was great; it questioned the dialectics on literary criteria for Indian literature. Rejecting literary norms of form like refined language and style, they analyzed Dalit literature in terms of content and the insight they provided into issues of untouchability, inequality and poverty. This move from form to content helped to focus social concern on the Dalits based on their subjective experiences.

More than this was the deeper impact on Dalit activists of social philosophers and reformers like Marx, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Jyothirao Govindrao Phule and E.V.Ramaswamy, affectionately known as Periyar. In such a context, it was but natural for writers from among the nomadic communities to consider Dalit thinkers and activists are their role models.

The Dalit Movement provided a whole new line of thought to the country. As a result, there was a surge in personal writing from among writers belonging to the nomadic clans. Marathi writers, Lakshmana Gaikwad, Mallaarisaab More, Balakrishna Renuke and Lakshman Mane penned their autobiographies. And their writing became famous as great works of literature. *Uchlhalya* won the Central Sahitya Akademi award. Lakshmana Mane's *Upaara* was recognized as the Best Literary Work by the government of Maharashtra. Mane was also awarded the Padmashri.

A reading of such personal journals provided awareness into the social life of the nomadic groups, as a result of which organizations of

such communities from every state could jointly build an identity based on their instability. The first generation students from the tribes have begun to write stories of their own lives after studying such autobiographical writing. In Kannada, we already have life stories like *Bayalabenneri, Alemaariya Antharanga* and *Gondaligaadantaha*. These personal histories move beyond the story of the writer to describe the life of the whole community, its experiences and conflicts. In contemporary literature, these writers anticipate, discuss and question the factor of instability of livelihood in their communities. As a result, the autobiography as a genre has moved beyond the scope of recording individual life stories to become an assemblage of the stories of a community.

In this chapter, the available collection of such writing is exposed to a critical assessment.

Every writer considers his description of life in his tribe to be the voice of a collective representation of life in all nomadic groups. In some places, the very silence of certain communities eloquently raises questions about their situation. At some stage, the dreams and aspirations envisaged in such writing for an equal-equitable society is handed over to sensitive members as their social responsibility.

The prominent feature of published autobiographies of nomads is that every writer sees themselves as travelers on the same sad journey. The world of nomads is indeed a unique experience.

## Mallaarisaab More's *GABAALA*

The term *Gabaala* in Marathi implies 'goods and chattels'; it includes the pots and pans the nomads carry with them; it signifies their earthly possessions. All nomadic communities carry similar items as *Gabaala* and this brands them as nomadic tribes whether they be Budgajangamas, Sudugaadu Sidhhas, Dombidasas, Godaligavesha Budududikes, Sindhollus or any other wandering community.

But other nomads like Handijogis, Bailapathaars, Phissadis, Sikkaligas and Gosangis are different from the communities mentioned above in that they carry a different kind of *Gabaala*, their type of wandering is different

and also, they are semi-wanderers in that they are gradually settling down.

The life depicted in *Gabaala* belongs to the decade of the seventies. Both *Uchhalya* and *Gabaala* partially describe the sense of isolation from society and the struggle against intolerable living conditions of wandering communities in the seventies.

*"I attempt to set before you the sorrows and hopes as well as the way of life of the nomadic community into which I was born in as much as I have been aware of them from the time I reached the age of discretion."*[1]

While the writer of *Gabaala* becomes the spokesman of his community through these opening lines in his memoirs, he is also the representative voice of all nomadic groups in the social fabric of India. The book depicts the way in which the Budabudike community carried on its profession of chanting blessings on homes rattling a little hand-drum while begging for groceries like lentils and grain and selling them to buy salt and oil, and how mainstream communities responded to its occupation of bringing them good tidings.

*"We got what we wanted by telling lies. We used to tell people we could establish prosperity in their homes by increasing their wealth and making their children obedient to them. And for this we would claim a fowl as sacrifice. In their ignorance, these people who are drowned in tradition would give as a hen to sacrifice. Why is this society so gullible as not to realize that we who professed to put them on the peak of prosperity had to go from door to door begging for food?"*[2]

This is the voice of self-worth from a boy from the nomadic community who has turned towards education. This is very natural. We come across countless incidents of anguish in the personal stories of Dalits who suffer ignominy through the system of untouchability. In his autobiography, *Oorukeri*, Siddalingaiah writes about his father ploughing the lands of the landlord by bearing the yoke on his own shoulders and his mother soothing his shoulders with fomentation in the evening. The sight that the boy Siddalingaiah describes is the pain of the hardship every Dalit has endured. Even Ambedkar is no different. Strangely, the Budabudike community which is known as trouble-makers or Gondaligaru is also recognized as part of the Joshi and Gondali groups.

*"It was quite late in the morning when I woke up. Children from the settlement, both boys and girls, were running with their chipped plates and dented mugs, racing one another. Desire is bad. I too ran with them with a dented plate. My mother stood by watching us. All I was wearing was a torn pair of shorts to cover my bottom; the rest of me was naked. I ran into the township. Each of us went into a different lane. I had no training in begging. My father had never sent me begging as he planned to send me to school. I had taken a stick as my father had instructed. I stood in front of the first door and said what I knew, 'You will be blessed with victory... Lakshmi, the Goddess of prosperity, will bless you... You will get wealth...Please give me a piece of roti.' No one came outside. I repeated the same words louder. A woman stepped out after some time and began to scold me, 'From where have so many of you come? Are other places struck with famine? Go, Go and die... If you can't live, why do you come and pester us...?' After saying so much she flung a quarter of a roti on my plate as if she was tossing it to a dog. My eyes filled with tears. I decided I would not go to the next house to beg. But then I had another thought. What if my father says, 'Did you bring just a piece of a roti?'? So I went to the next house. But my throat was constricted; I could not utter a word. And yet, with great determination I spoke the words I had said before. Someone came from that house and said, 'You little imp! Will you work here clearing buffalo-dung? Your caste is only good enough to eat the excretions of your mothers, nothing else. Go away! ... Get lost! ...' I continued to stand there. He was furious. 'Will you go now and do you need a caning?' he shouted. Then I was very scared."*[3]

The social hierarchy of caste has influenced the culture of our people. Some important questions arise out of this situation: At which stage of historical development of the caste system did the nomads become wanderers? Why did they become nomadic? What kind of an impact did the communities of the upper castes have on them?

Also to be considered is the fact that communities from the North like Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra may not have been wandering tribes originally. This assumption arises from the lack of documentation on why social groups like the Lambanis, Bailapataars, Dambaaraa, Phisaadis, Chapparbaand gravitated from the North to the South or on the suffering they must have endured during the journey. How could one

expect any social documents on communities of outcastes from a social order impelled by the caste structure? This has become a matter of serious discussion in forums of recent Subaltern studies.

Nevertheless, some information is available regarding their origins in the ancient creation stories of the communities, in their songs and the opinions of their elders. Even now we can learn from the collective oral histories of the Lambanis about their sense of loyalty to Mughal rule, the way the community was caught up in the rise and fall of political authority of the Mughals, and how, with the deterioration of their power and the reversal of fortune of their rulers, the Lambanis had to migrate to the South and also about the social context that forced them to become nomads.

Similarly, together with the knowledge of their handicraft, we can also learn about the contextual reasons that transformed clans like Chapparbaand, Phisaadi and Bailapataar into nomadic groups. Significantly, there are creation stories that trace the origins of Lambanis, Marvadis, Jains, Phisaadis, and Bailapataars to the same mother / source group. These oral histories are complemented by an analysis of the similarity in their languages and lifestyle.

On the other hand, the wanderings of hunting forest-dwellers like Phaardis are not controlled either by language or by frontier. Such is the assumption of all communities living in their geographic environment even to this day. In their present situation, the Gondalis and Helavas have not retained either the deep vitality or the fighting spirit of their clans. This may not be entirely due to their financial situation or the pace of changing times because wealth has not destroyed caste system in villages. But the Gondali group underwent a cultural change. They narrated stories from the Puranas to people of the upper and middle castes. They converted stories from the epics, Ramayana and Mahabharatha, into folk songs and sang them. In this manner they endeared themselves to the upper castes and became one of the rungs in the hierarchy of caste. That is how they gained entry into homes of the higher castes to sing what is now culturally accepted as *Gondalimela*. This is the power of Art; it is also the means by which an artiste acquires respectability through his creative prowess. It

raises a pertinent question: why did the other tribes not avail of this means of merging with the social mainstream?

The answer can be found in the literary work, *Uchhalya.* It narrates episodes of social malice, assault, humiliation and disgust that shake the complacency of the reader. Though the social condition of most nomadic groups seems to be the same, the plight of the criminal clan, Uchhlaya, is vastly different. The work is special since it records the process of the community dying daily. It is about criminal tribes like Dombaru, Phaardi, Gantichor, Bouvari and Korama who are unable to shake off the stigma of criminality even to this day. It is for this reason that criminal tribes were specifically included with untouchables and primitive and aboriginal tribes at every stage of deliberations on the reservation policy. Communalists who oppose the inclusion of tribes in the reservation policy are not aware of this. In fact, as a consequence of census, the tribes appear to be quite formidable. This does not mean that government organizations which do not show their obligatory concern for the tribes do not understand their predicament as being the lowest beneficiaries in every dimension of progress. It is common knowledge that the government administration which woos and nurtures the vote-bank uses its employees as a powerful entity to control and exploit caste-politics.

Also, with no opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the reservation policy, the leaders of such tribes are unable to voice the despicable poverty of their disunited / scattered communities.

*"Supper was over. Mother spread the mattresses. What kind of mattresses? Just two quilts altogether. Mother used to say they had been sewn when I was born. They had large holes in them. When I spread a quilt over me, my head would peep out of a tear. We do not have to consider the smaller holes. You could see through and through. One of the quilts served as a mattress. Even that was more than half torn. Half the body had to sleep on the mud floor. All of us would sleep between these two quilts crouching with our knees tucked into our bellies. It would be cold in the tent and yet we would sleep quietly. As I lay there, it occurred to me that I would have to go begging the next day. I tried to remember whatever my elder brother used to say while begging, 'You will be blessed with victory... Lakshmi, the Goddess of prosperity, will bless you... You will get*

*wealth...Please give me a piece of roti.' I dwelt on it for a long time. I was not aware when the others had gone to sleep. I was not aware when I drifted off to sleep."*[4]

Through the social episodes in *Gabaala*, Mallaarisaab More gave voice to the competitive jealousy and rivalry that arose for the sake of education, the humaneness of some people in society, the rare occasions of loving concern, the hopes of his naive community, loss and gain, indignity, the continuous wandering and the frustrating social condition of having to beg despite having passed matriculation. Though the cause for such humiliation is caste-based feudalism, the clan accepts it as the outcome of their birth in a mood of self-depreciation that promotes a defeatist mindset.

*"Rain made a tremendous impact as it poured heavily by the minute. A whole family had to sustain its life in the shelter of a quilt or a tent. Hailstones fell as if someone was pelting stones. Our hope of survival was minimal. Rainwater flowed under our feet. We folded our legs and felt them go to sleep as if the blood had congealed. Hailstones began to fall again. Sukhadev More's mother had begun to act strangely. She was an old woman. How far could she endure the fury of the rain? People were weeping. But their cries were deafened by the onslaught of the downpour. In a little while the fury of the thundershower abated and then stopped completely. All of us left our personal burdens in the water and ran to Sukhdev More's tent. His mother, Banaabai, had become rigid with the cold. 'Arre, light a fire or else the old woman might die,' said Annappa Bise. Everyone looked around for kindling but where could we find any dry twigs? Some brought scraps of cloth from the bundle of pots and pans, some others slit a few wooden pegs; someone poured oil on it and lit it. They brought Banaaajji to sit beside the fire. After a while the old lady recovered. Everyone tied their bundles on the horses. None of the hens seemed to survive. We left them there. Our loads were dripping with water. The dogs stood shriveled up. We moved forward with our burden. The dogs followed teetering. Finally we reached the outskirts of a town. We put down our load in a damp place...*

*Women from a few homes showed compassion. Abas was still weeping. The two plates were empty. We walked slowly towards our tents. Our feet bled as we walked."*[5]

It may seem a social wrong to sympathize with such abject wretchedness. The story of a student who should be focused on his studies but helplessly forced to beg for a living might remain a narration of an isolated case. Many tribal children are not registered in hostels as they do not get the minimum marks for eligibility. The only way out of this situation is to have a separate reservation policy and list for the scheduled tribes. Or else it would not be an exaggeration to state that the Indian government is like the giant, Polyphemus, the head of the Cyclops in the Greek legend; blind to the fate of 14 crores of nomads. And this is the government that is moving towards progress, controlling environmental fury against exploitation of natural resources, sending armed peace-keeping forces to countries like Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and the UN.

In these challenging circumstances, the boy Mallaarisaab More enters the eleventh grade and eventually graduates from the Commerce stream. But the question that troubles him after that is: What next?

A first generation learner from an illiterate community changes his viewpoint after becoming educated. How could Eliza Doolittle, the heroine of Bernard Shaw's play, *Pygmalion,* return to a life amidst the lower classes of British society to which she belonged, after becoming so proficient in the refinement and culture of the upper classes as to enter high society as an undetected imposter? The predicament of More, the B.Com graduate was similar. Wandering was his way of life; it would carry on. Who knew what would happen next? Only Time would determine which other courses his journey would take. Who knows when light brightens up a path in real life?

*"Our wandering started again. I had different kinds of experiences while I went begging: dogs would give chase, people would abuse. The days rolled on in this manner. Our lifestyle did not bother us overmuch. Each individual of our tribes lived in the jungle and died helplessly in the jungle. He was struck down incessantly by many experiences. All that my people knew was: we have been born; we have to live somehow. They learnt to live within their means spending for their survival whatever earnings came their way each day. They had no other intention beyond existence."*[6]

Though this may seem to be the natural objective of every educated person, the awareness of being destitute raises many other questions with regard to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Later, Mallaarasaab More worked as an officer at Yeshwant Rao Chauhan Autonomous University. The strange thing is: why did not such a sensitive person who had entered the social mainstream raise his voice for the unification of all nomadic people? Was this a limitation in him? Did he have a personal reason? Such questions interrogate the social obligations of any writing to its ethos. The humiliations that Ambedkar endured made him a beacon of light and hope to the exploited in this country. Have the writers who have come from the lowest rungs of society suffered enough to burn like ember to resist exploitation? Or do they plan to settle down like coal? If so, what is their social obligation to their communities? Is the writer's life different from his writing? These are questions of great concern that must confront future writers of autobiographies.

*"The fourth semester of part three of B.Com was the final semester of my undergraduate course. It was necessary for me to focus on my studies. Anyway, I would have to return to the tent after my exams...I would wander about... That was inevitable. Who knows what the future would hold? Time alone could decide the routes I should begin to take in my future wanderings. Until now I have lived through untold sorrow and misery. I wish to stand more steadily in my helpless nomadic life. I cannot foresee my future. For a wanderer in gloom like me, what else can come to my help except darkness? Many lights have brightened my imagination but in reality, will even one of them light my way? When? Who knows?"*[7]

### Lakshmana Gaikwad's *Uchhalya*

Lakshmana Gaikwad's *Uchhalya* is the first piece of literary writing in India that announced with strident notes the plight of nomadic people. Since it won the Central Sahitya Akademi award in 1998, it was translated, thus making it possible for *Uchhalya* to win other awards at national and international levels. It has recorded new experiences in the world of nomads. Until then, it was only Dalit literature, Dalit autobiographies in particular, that questioned and deconstructed the traditional canon of Indian

Literatures leading to a sincere examination of social conscience. But *Uchhalya* has uncovered a world different from that of the Dalits; it unfolds the pitiable plight of nomadic communities that are overwhelmed by social abuse.

Gaikwad who strove for the unification of nomadic clans, has dedicated *Uchhalya* to, *'All my friends who are committed to the struggle for change'*.[8] It is significant that he has dedicated his autobiography to all social leaders and activists.

The criminal tribes that the British referred to as the Uchhalya community are called Gunhegaararu by the local folk.

Gaikwad says his community had primarily resorted to thieving as their occupation since all other means of earning a livelihood were closed to them; their lifestyle did not facilitate procuring jobs in farming or factories. Unfortunately, the later generations, as a whole, were branded as petty criminals only because they happened to be born in that community. Another nomadic tribe with a similar stigma is Maangaarudi. To this day, members of such communities have not been able to override the social implications of the disgrace. Even those who have moved into the mainstream social fabric dumbly suffer the pressures of unfair indictment. Some of them are so disgusted with their predicament that they resort to full-scale criminality and suffer police atrocities as if it is their main objective in life.

*"Once, my grandfather went to the village fair to pick someone's pocket. He was drunk. He saw an old man folding a few notes into his dhoti and tucking it in at his waist. Grandfather tried to cut the dhoti with a sharp blade and, in the process, cut the man's thigh as well. The man bled profusely and he began to shout. A policeman arrested Grandfather and beat him up mercilessly. He searched every part of our house. I hid under a sheet like a puppy. Grandfather's hands were manacled. The police conducted an inquiry: 'Tell us where you have hidden the money and gold. Or else you'll get a sound thrashing.'*[9]

*'See for yourself, Sir. It is not anywhere in the house,' replied Grandfather.'*[10]

*'Your wife may know,' said the constable furiously. He dragged my*

*grandmother by her hair and beat her. My mother ran into the jungle as soon as she heard the police had come. They began to round up the other women and children in the house and beat them up. As for my grandmother, they dragged her by the breasts and beat her. And then the police dragged away my grandfather with them. He had to spend a few months in jail. And thereafter, after release, he had to report at the police station twice a day, morning and night. My grandfather would ride a donkey to the police station every day. The police had appointed him as 'garundaa' which meant that he had to help the police to locate other criminals. The whole family was beaten if ever Grandfather did not report at the station. And so, Grandfather did not do any other job except helping the police to catch thieves.'*[11]

*"No one would give my father a job since he belonged to the thieving tribe. They would not send my aunt to work in the fields. Eventually, my grandmother started thieving to make ends meet. She used to cut gold chains on children and women's necks, earrings and finger rings with a sharp blade at village fairs. She would sell them to the landlord and manage the house. Sometimes the police would check the houses of the Uchlhalya (Gantuchora) community. At such times the landlord who had bought the loot would pacify the police with some money as bribe. Our tribe could not move out of our locale without the written permission of the senior police officials."*[12]

Lakshmana Gaikwad did not continue his studies for any of the conventional qualifications. He had studied only up to the ninth standard. But, by then, he was already educated for life; he knew the chasm that lay between his community and society. He wrote a letter to the erstwhile Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi asking her why the government could not make arrangements to provide one square meal a day to their communities.

Gaikwad's style of writing in *Uchlhalya* is similar to that of a conversation between him and a social welfare officer. The vocabulary, sentence-structure, grammar, narrative structure, research methods are beyond question. *"I sing as it flows,"* is his ode.

*"...I stood next to the manager and said, 'Gandhi and Nehru won the independence of our country at great cost to themselves. Gandhi strove to bring comfort to the poor. But even in this independent country we are being flogged as we were when the British were here. This is not right.' Perhaps the manager*

*did not know the real situation. So I told him, 'If a labourer reports to work two minutes late, his card is torn and he is marked absent. Labourers are marked as working for four hours only though they work for eight. Fourteen-year-old children are made to work for free; they are sent to the toilets whenever there is an inspection. The behavior of the supervisor is not right; he treats the workers as slaves. Let him get the job done but he should not beat them.' The workers insisted that I should make a speech. As a child weeps out his woes to his mother, I made a speech, weeping.*

*Tears flowed as I spoke. Everyone listened to me quietly. After I had finished speaking, as I went to sit with the other labourers, the manager stood up and spoke. He seemed angry. 'Dear labourer-friends! If everything that Lakshmana Gaikwad has said is true, it is indeed sad news. In future, your immediate boss and the supervisor should not beat anyone. They have to get work done with compassion. But we cannot keep quiet regarding workers who do not do their job. Work must go on as it has been till now. Don't listen to anyone. Stop beating!' This is how he finished his speech."*[13]

In this way Gaikwad endeared himself to everyone because he laid bare the facts with sincere feeling. Nowhere do we find him diffident about the impression he could be making on an educated person. He rejected all the wealth he would have acquired by marrying his father's sister's daughter as per tradition but he wanted to be faithful to a new alliance to whom he had given his word. Though marriage is considered an important rite of passage to manhood, it was a social contract, a lifetime bonding to the writer.

Gaikwad's zest for life comes through in his autobiography. Not all representatives of the Dalits or nomadic people appear downhearted. They reveal the resilience of birds and animals that lick their wounds and carry on; even if they be so poor as to steal to fill their bellies, to live in gutters, to walk about with their pockets empty, to face the brutality of society, they lie low for a while to gather strength and then move on. This point comes through as the most significant in a reading of Gaikwad's autobiography, *Uchhalya*.

Another important feature in the book is the portrayal of the clans as

fearless, as being clever enough to get out of any situation, however dangerous. It would have been natural for Gaikwad to let down the woman he loved for fear of reprisal or at least to elope with her. But the mindset of a nomad is as desperate as that of a fish out of water. How does a man respond to love belonging as he does to a community that ekes out a living under the stigma of being criminals? It is not just a social question; it is an ethical question too. Stealing is not considered unethical by tribals who have to suffer because of the feudal mentality in society that claims everything in the world as its own. How can their criminality be unethical when their young women are kicked in the breasts by heavily booted policemen? To them stealing is but sharing. But, fearing for his life, Gaikwad disappointed the woman who trusted him. And the autobiography focuses mainly on his struggle for survival.

**Influenced by Marxist principles, he formed a mill-workers union.**

*"I went to the table where the boss was seated. My legs were trembling, yet I made a speech: 'We have hands, legs, heads and bellies. The body works well only if these are well. Similarly, the boss becomes important only when the labourers are well. Though we may have different jobs, we are all human. Let us work together to make Gandhi's dream a reality.' Everyone clapped when I finished. The manager was so pleased with my speech that he gifted me Rs. 11."*[14]

Gaikwad struggled and succeeded somehow. But has his Uchhalya community which bears the stigma of being thieves, which is deprived of education and is without proper leadership and guidance and which is ignorant of government projects to benefit them been awakened by his labour?

Thanks to the literary work, *Uchhalya*, the plight of the nomadic tribe, Gantichor, was noticed by important organizations. But do such establishments that consist of academia and other quasi-government organizations whose work-force is paid through revenue collected as tax, meet these tribal communities face to face? Their interest being purely academic research how could a symposium or two about their situation empower the tribals in any way? Have such seminars and symposiums afforded any guidelines and pointers to the organizations working for

nomadic communities? On the other hand, such negative mindsets and the negative attitude of the government in their developmental programmes have only been a hindrance to such people.

*"My father was dead and I was crying. My mother too died in this state of abject poverty; she did not see a single happy day. People who were around comforted me. Harishchandra was nowhere around. Until now I had my father's support and now I had lost it. I was sad that my father had to die though he had the will to live; for want of timely medicines and nourishment. I sent word about my father's death through a boy to my elder brother in the mill. My elder brother, sister-in-law and others came beating their breasts in sorrow. We brothers hugged one another and spent the whole night weeping. I used to consider a Marwadi woman as my sister and now I told her about my father's death and that we did not have money even to buy firewood to cremate him. She gave me Rs. 150."*[15]

Even to this day, the Habitual Offenders Act of 1950 is not annulled. Senior police officers of today are still in the time-wrap of British rule in India. They continue to consider the criminal tribes, their mindset and their hereditary professions as a hindrance to social progress. As a result, they repress the tribal communities even in the present and hardly do anything worthwhile towards their development.

The only advantage of activists from among the tribal communities is that they gain some visibility and have some impact on welfare organizations. But these groups of activists are like ant-hills, small and ineffective. They are under a misguided illusion that they will progress through various developmental projects by securing the compassionate aid of mainstream communities.

*"Once there was a theft in the house of the landlord of Salukawadi. The police could not trace the robbers despite their best efforts. They sought the help of sniffer dogs. The dogs turned towards the burial ground and barked. The cemetery gypsies lived there; their occupation was beggary. The police searched their houses. They threatened the gypsies but they could not locate the stolen goods. Finally, they rounded up a blind man and some fifteen to twenty men and put them in the lock-up. I went to the police station and argued on their behalf as much as I could. Ultimately they filed a case against three of them and set the rest free."*[16]

A person who has matured through such experiences cannot help but fight for the rights of his people. This is true of all sincere activists.

Whatever it be, the readers of Lakshmana Gaikwad's personal history, *Uchhalya*, will be convinced that they too should participate in such rational and therefore practical activism to get the marginalized communities out of the vicious circle they are in and to strive for a change for the better in their lives.

### Kuppenagaraja's *Alemaariya Anthranga*

The recently released autobiography, *Alemariya Antharanga* by Kuppenagaraj who has worked towards the unification of scheduled tribes is a masterpiece in the genre.

Kuppenaraja belongs to the Dombidasa clan and, most probably, he is the first graduate from his community. On completing his graduation from Mysore University he continued to stay in the Dalit students' hostel as a Dalit activist. As an executive of the Dalit unification committee, he grew up amid experiences of struggle.

Like the other autobiographies, Nararaja's opus too begins with sadness:

*"My father did not posses even a palm-width of land anywhere in this spacious country. With no land to his name, Father had wandered from the North from town to town with the traditional square piece of cloth hanging like a bag from his shoulder, holding his worldly possessions. The only ancestral gift he had acquired was the occupation of begging. He would take his family to fertile places where rains were good and beg for food through singing folk songs, enacting a form of folk-drama called bayalata in open spaces and conducting harikathe by reciting mythical stories through songs. The extended family set up camp where there was water and shade - wherever my father felt it was conducive to rest for a few days. My mother would set up three stones, find some kindling in the vicinity, light a fire and cook whatever she could, to fill our bellies."*[17]

Nagaraja has recorded in detail the deeper implications of the cultural aspects of his community.

*"The art of display in philosophical chants and devotional songs like the kelike arise from a tradition of mystical devotion in the Dombidasa community. This does not imply that they are worshippers of Shiva. They follow the Vaishanava tradition and have adapted it to suit their nomadic tendency. Therefore they are considered outcastes or untouchables by mainstream Vaishnava communities. Since they do not bother about rites and rituals, their form of religious belief is more detached and spiritual. And so they are considered casteless."*[18]

In the part of the Introduction entitled, *The Journey of the Nomad to the World of Letters*, the writer addresses it to 'us who belong to the Backward classes as a result of untouchability'. Generally, Madigas and Holeyas are considered as untouchables. But in this context, even Daya Pawar, Lakshman Mane and Lakshmana Gaikwad consider themselves and their communities as nomadic untouchables. *Alemariya Antharanga* reveals that the Dombidasa group did not suffer the atrocities that the Uchhalyas endured as a community. The latter suffered unspeakable social ignominy by being branded as people who eat cats, as women who shitted while being whipped for thieving and as a criminal tribe.

The difference between Dalit identity and Nomadic identity is merely technical. The world of nomads can be considered untouchable both physically and mentally.

In his book, *The Untouchable*, Ambedkar describes two tribes that fought with each other and the tribe that lost becoming nomadic. He calls them 'broken men'. He explains, 'Nomads are untouchables who live on the fringes of society to serve those in power within society'.

Though it is natural for Nagaraja to describe the travails of his childhood in a manner similar to Mallaarisaab More's *Gabbala*, the difference between the social environment between South Karnataka and North Karnataka can be noticed in the style of his language and the ambiance he creates.

Nagaraja's narration continues: When there was severe famine in the land, Nagaraja journeyed with his father, Singayya, as far as Coorg surviving by begging as their cursed community was historically fated to

do. Two or three artiste families of the docile Dombidasa tribe settled down on the front porch of a Gowda's house. This was a new phase in their lives that brought them a measure of tranquility. The patel or chieftain of the town, Puttamallappa, built a house for them in the general grazing land. Many such acts of generosity by compassionate elders of the wealthy upper caste are recorded in the autobiographies of South Karnataka writers.

Even to this day, friends of the struggle remember the way in which nomadic communities were persecuted and not allowed to settle down in a housing colony set up in Bellary in North Karnataka, all because they belonged to a thieving community. On the other hand, the large-hearted Puttamallappa suggested that the Dombidasa tribe should build more houses on the vacant pasture lands on either side of the Hunsur-Mysore Highway as the families of the tribe were increasing.

To the right lived the Savarnis and to the left, the Harijans. The Dombidasa tribe built their huts between the two settlements. These people helped the tribe with building material like logs, coconut palms, and hay. The two communities served as protection to the community of Dombidasa folk-artistes.

The villagers were so enthralled with the folk dance-drama, the bayalata, that they too learnt the art form and performed plays drawn from myth and legend. Whenever a narrator-teacher from the Harijan settlement trained the members of his troupe, the narrator from the Savarni settlement too started training so much so that the Dombidasa tribe became instrumental in teaching both the groups to live in unity through their art-forms.

The writer grew up in such an environment and joined a hostel for Dalits. More importantly, he became aware of Dalit activism. The episode in which he describe being caught while stealing a copy of Ambedkar's book reveals an educational context in which Dalit students could not afford to buy books. In the midst of all this, the Dombidasa tribe was not considered eligible for reservation benefits, thanks to the Havanur Report. And so, Nagaraja had to return home from the hostel with his trunk on his head. Though he faults Havanur for doing this, one cannot forget that

Havanur was instrumental in getting many other smaller, more insignificant outcaste communities to benefit from the reservation policy.

It is indeed praiseworthy that Kuppenagaraja has used the episodic style of narration for his autobiography, *Alemariya Antharanga*. This book serves as an invaluable research document about the lifestyle of a tribal community.

**Balagurumurthy's *Bayala Benneri***

Balagurumurthy's *Bayala Benneri* is the first autobiography in Kannada by a nomad. Though it is yet to be published, it is a magnificent life story serialized in the Kannada weekly, *Agni*, from the year 2008 continuously for two years. The ancestors of the budgajangam tribe claim that they are a Telugu nomadic community that originated from Srisaila in Andhra Pradesh. Wandering from there all over the country without restrictions of frontier, language or religion this community has lived its nomadic way of life. It is known by different names in different regions: whereas in the South the tribe is known as Bairagi, Kondamama, Sadhu, Sanyasi, Jaggali or Bababudda, in the North it is identified as Hagaluvesha, Balasantha, Bahuroopi or Burrakathe. Though the Sudugaadasiddha community too belongs to the Budgajangama group sharing the same language, lifestyle, rituals, store of community knowledge, dress and relationships, the Sudugaadasiddhas are considered different only by virtue of their family occupation of working in the graveyard.

Ignorant of this background regarding their origin, illiterate Budgajangamas begin to trace their life- stories from Ebhuthinaarakka, a matriarch of the community famous as a folk-artiste for her *Burrakathe*.

Balagurumurthy starts his autobiography with the story of his grandmother, thus making a statement that autobiographies projecting a feeling of being orphaned in a helpless, hopeless world present a world-view of alienation. Explaining Burrakathe as the hereditary profession of his community, he goes on to detail the life of women as a relevant context:

*"My grandmother, Naarakka, who was as tall as the bamboo-pole was given in marriage to my grandfather, Ebluthi Venkatappa; he was short. She had lost*

*her father when she was yet a child and her mother, Kandhamma, was married off to Nooni-Gurayi as his third wife. And so Naarakka grew up in the house of her maternal uncle, Kelike Doddaeerayya and learnt the folk-art of Kelike and sang the choruses during dance-drama. Though she was interested in Paslikotla, the artiste who played the part of Maayalu Marathi in the play, Balanagamma, she did not marry him. As was typical in the stories of the clan, she could have wandered all over the country with him. But she was not willing to stand up against her uncle, Doaddaeerayya, who had directed forty folk-plays; so she married Ebhuthi Venkatappa."*[19]

Balagurumurthy's grandmother's mother was a beautiful woman. Her husband, Pedhayya, suspected her fidelity and made her swear before the god of every ruined temple they found on their wanderings.

*"Pedhayya was like Shiva, a mendicant. He and his wife, Kandhamma, had wandered around Marakalaghatta, Kaaludhalali, Seelesandhra, Ramasandhra and Salinagunte and reached a wayside shrine to Oni Anjaneya on the way to Kundapura. It was during Shankrathi (mid-January). The granaries of towns were full of the colours of harvest. They had walked eighteen miles in the early morning and reached the hill, Avani. Kandhamma lit camphor in front of the shrine swearing that she had not set her mind on any other man. Pedhayya went into the dark and dingy interior of the broken-down shrine, bowed before the god and looking at his wife said, 'Your truth is alive; the omen is favourable.' Even as he was saying that, he screamed, 'Ayyo, it hit me!' and fell down."*[20]

Kandhama's courage as a woman who spent an entire night alone in the open wilderness enduring the grief of her husband dying like an orphan is truly amazing. We hardly come across widows in these communities since remarriage, known as 'koodike' is natural. When Naarakka marries again, she leaves her two children and moves on.

While Naarakka's mother, Kandhamma, laments her fate as in a way of life described in Rajendra Singh Bedi's writing, *Ek Malinka Chaadhar*, Naarakka grows and flourishes in the context of the Kelike tradition marrying Eebhuthi Venkatappa as per her maternal uncle's wish though she was fond of a fellow-artiste.

The writers do not see the lifestyle of the nomadic communities with regret or sadness. Their lives are free like that of birds and animals. They are not disturbed by civilization since they are away from mainstream developments.

*"Twirling his moustache, Eebhuthi Venkatappa used to say 'A meal without a piece of meat is like a water-melon patch'. Throughout his life, he cooked the meat curry. Wearing a loincloth, setting up four stones in the open-air for the fire, he would cook a meat dish spreading its appetizing aroma all around the place. There were times when he would bring eight or ten tortoises, slit them open and spread the meat in the sun to dry. When he had to go hunting he would sprinkle the dried meat with some chilly powder and salt thus preparing something to munch like a jerky. Then he would go to the toddy shop with his wife, Naarakka, to enjoy the dried tortoise meat with drink. Grandmother would be in her element as they walked back to their dwelling in the open, hand in hand.*

*Since Naarakka had learnt to sing kelikes since she was five, she had only to open her mouth for hymns of Kaivaara Thatha to stream out."*

Balagurumurthy's father's father, Nadupayya Kondamaama was a folk-artiste who donned costumes and painted his face to act in dance-dramas. Of his three sons, the middle one, Nadupugurumurthy, the writer's elder uncle cast away his wife, Kuntannikka, literally like a sick dog because she contacted leprosy. Balagurumurthy describes this dispassionately.

He describes vividly how his community found refuge in the front yard of the Gowda of Medihalli. In this description, their love of life in the midst of poverty, ignorance and an awareness of being the destitutes of society, comes through marvelously. The agricultural community that toils throughout the year is amazed at the lifestyle of the wandering communities that is simultaneously tragic and zestful, making it a social irony. As a student of literature, Balagurumurthy would have been influenced by writers like Wordsworth and K.V.Puttappa and their love for Nature. But he attributes his ability to glorify Nature with heart and mind despite his poverty to his early life in Medahalli.

*"Medahalli was not like other villages. It was special. It was like a married woman hugging three rives all around her. To the south-west was a jungle, to the*

*north was Chiggowda's open field with huge boulders, beyond it was Doddakere, the big tank; that was its name. Below was a brushwood forest. Below the jungle was Medahalli and to its left was Maadanakere. When the Maadanakere tank was full one needed a hundred eyes to see the mile-long paddy field. On the shoulder of Maadanakere was Odhini kere. No one knows who named this small pond as Odhini kere. On the banks of this pond is Medahalli. The seven or eight big families in the huge houses have not split up but live together as a joint-family. While the houses of Chiggowda, Thimmarayagowda, Nanjundagowda and Swamegowda are spread out inside the village, to the south are the ragi fields and land belonging to Giddegowda. A narrow lane separates Giddegowda's land from the rest of the villagers. The villagers had built their houses around Giddegowda's granary, not mingling with the others. To the south-west of the village was the settlement of the labourers. Four or five families belonging to Nallappa, Minchaami, Yankataronappa and Gunjurayya worked as farm-hands for the Gowda of the village. But the men of these forest communities continued to be nomads though they did have a permanent settlement in this village. They would leave their wives and children and wander to distant villages. They returned after three or four months their shoulder-sack laden with grain got from begging during their wandering. They would call it shandra-shanna, grain got from wandering.''*[21]

*The men who returned from the shandra or wanderings sold the grain they had got from begging and spent the money on a drinking bout with their families; women and children included. All of them sang throughout the night. Dogs moaned to hear their intoxicated singing. Sometimes, the men from the village came and kicked them. As soon as they felt the blows, they became silent.*

The main reason for Balagurumurthy recreating the incident of his paternal grandfather, Naduppayya Kondamaama's death as an episode is his creative consciousness. Though he was not present when his grandfather died, his artistic imagination could piece together as a whole the details he had gathered from his mother, grandmother, maternal grandfather and the community. It is what Coleridge describes as Imagination in his essay, *Imagination and Fancy*, not Fancy. Though belonging to a tribal community that did not have a graveyard, the grandfather was buried in a grave, thanks to the benevolence of the farmers in the village. This incident becomes important for many reasons. In villages that are caste-ridden hell-

holes, such compassion and humaneness is not meant for Dalits. Perhaps the reason for such generosity of spirit was the humility of the community or the man's repute as a life-long folk-artiste. It is not surprising if there were other reasons too.

*"An incident that no one had seen or heard occurred in the community. For the first time in the history of tribes, my nomadic grandfather, Naduppayya's body was carried on a cart in procession followed by his people carrying their shoulder-packs, singing.*

*The nomadic people have no place in any village to bury the dead but, thanks to Giddegowda's leadership, my grandfather's body was buried in a grave. Though the whole village is filled with agricultural land, Giddegowda and Naduppayya's people could make a cradle in the earth in which they could lay him to rest.*

*'Le, Giddegowda too has become a member of the nomadic tribe,' said the villagers to humiliate him. But the Nadupayya's clan saw him as their guardian-father, their nurturing mother. And many stories grew around Giddegowda's concern for the nomads."*[22]

It is strange that Gurumurthy's father was called, Bombai; a name with a self-evident meaning. He got the nomenclature when he ran away from home though did not go anywhere near Bombay. Funnily enough, his younger brother did not get the title though he did go to Bombay to learn tailoring!

Gurumurthy loved his mother, Yenkatamma, intensely, having seen her being abused by his drunken father. Recognizing it as Oedipus complex, he compares it to a similar love-relationship between Paul Morrel and his mother in D.H.Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers,* where Paul considers his mother as the most precious women in the world. Seeing and experiencing the troubles she had to endure, Gurumurthy has stabilized his tribe that was collapsing.

The writer's description of the feudal set-up in his society is also a description of the normal social order in South Karnataka. The village had a chit-fund, a kind of savings-scheme practiced in India. Gurumurthy

agonizes over the humiliation the people of his community had to endure by being beaten in front of the Gowda, the village headman. Later, he protests against such practice because he felt the Gowda exploited the nomadic people by deliberately including them to contribute to the chit-fund knowing full well that they were incapable of money transactions. Some members of the grandparent generation of the writer, like Matamakka and Matamayya, lived all their lives in debts they could never clear because either they had taken financial loans willing to pay ten times the principal amount as interest or, in an emergency, they had foregone half the amount due to them for whatever they could bid for and get. and had to pay interest for it all their lives. Gurumurthy was helpless when Pillegowda, a tribal, had to surrender his land because he could not repay a mere Rs. 100 and the interest accumulated on it for two years. Today the same four acres of land is valued at crores of rupees; the Gowda has built a temple for Anjaneya on it. These are memories of his childhood. Gurumurthy questions the situation in which his community stands outside the temple singing for the god who has not benefitted them in any way.

There are incidents which introduce Gurumurthy to education that make him one of the most famous personalities in nomadic autobiographies. Ranganathaswami, a teacher from the community of shepherds, sent him to school. Though people in the village referred to the teacher as a shepherd, Gurumurthy did not realize the significance of the term.

*"The Primary school is beyond our village, Medahalli, on the road that runs in front of our settlement, towards the west where the over-flow of the tank is situated. I used to stare at the school while grazing the Gowda's sheep. Sometimes I would secretly peep into the back window of the school thinking there was a magnificent world inside it. I would lean against the wall listening to the reading and singing, and watching the pupils writing. In the evenings, I would stare open-mouthed at the Gowda's children studying on the front porch of his house.*

*Whenever Nanjamma shouted, 'Le, get away! Your clothes stink!' I would go to the chicken coup beyond the front porch and sleep in it enjoying the squeaks of mice. But there I was infested with tics from the fowls. 'Amma, I feel something creeping all over me,' I would say and my mother would come in the dark with*

*ash and smear it all over me. I could hear my father's snores all the way beyond the front porch.*''[23]

Growing in such an environment, the writer's curiosity regarding the idea of 'school' was aroused. Quite a few experiences made an impact on the young Balagurumurthy while studying in Medahalli, Dhyavanagondhi and Devalaapura. They had to do with teachers like Sampangi meshtru who had a fondness for his students and who taught English; K. Ramaiah, a Gandhian who invited the poet, Gopalakrishna Adiga to the school; the tender-hearted MAH who read K.V.Puttappa's novels in class. They helped him grow spiritually.

Later, when he studied for a degree in Arts after failing a diploma course, his education in Tumkur became an unforgettable phase, a turning point in his life. Being exposed to British and Kannada literary writers, Balagurumurthy reflected on the personal and social values depicted by some of the greatest creative minds in the world. Kariya Nayak of the post-graduate course, Sannaguddayya who taught him English Literature and late sent him on to further studies and Philomena Madam made a tremendous impact on him.

While most students were preoccupied with the problems of youth, the writer's main anxiety was procuring food. The worst was when the hostel closed for vacation. During such times, the Swamiji of Siddaganga Mutt, Gowrishankara Swamij, arranged for him to eat at the Mutt.

*Bayala Benneri*, as an autobiography, seems to be deficient in providing information about the community as a whole. But then, the social journey depicted in other personal histories like *Uchhalya, Gondhaligya, Akkaramaashi* and *Alemariya Antharanga* too seems to be similar.

Balagurumurthy was fortunate to continue his education while being a warden in a hostel for Physical Training in Maharashtra and teaching there. From this viewpoint the author of *Bayala Benneri* seems different from other autobiographers. Even as the writer felt a spiritual detachment as a student of literature influenced by the world-view of Lawrence, Hardy and Kuvempu, he was ostracized as a member of a nomadic community.

The romantic episodes in his life story detract from the solemnity of the narration since such experiences are common to everyone.

His journey through life lands him the post of a lecturer in a government college. But the more significant development is his leaning towards activism. From that viewpoint, his autobiography gains in value. The writer was able to see the problems in nomadic communities created through the politics of power wielded by the upper classes and their ability to instill fear resulting in the nomads losing their voice. The identity of such people was threatened increasing their anxiety.

The writer has clearly understood the social handicap of the nomadic groups owing to the government administrations discrediting the truth and denying wandering communities their constitutional rights for three-quarters of a century. He supports the view that such a drawback results in frustration that may vent itself in undeserved retaliation at times.

*"Through the help of writing and working towards uniting the nomads, I experienced dreams and disappointments. It became usual for me to wander from taluk to taluk, district to district, meeting our nomadic friends and organizing small processions to meet the head of the taluk or the collector of the district.*

*But, though the officers commiserated with the plight of the nomads, they did not do anything to alleviate it. At such times, I wished I could shoot down the administration... and regretted that it could not be done.*

*One head of a taluk asked for identity-proof to give a caste certificate to a nomad. How could the tribes of illiterate wanderers with no land to call their own, no voter's ID provide such proof?*

*But people with a mainstream mind-set do not understand their predicament."*

Though it is an autobiography, *Bayala Benneri* does not describe the entire life of Balagurumurthy. It focuses mainly on his childhood, education and the early lessons he learnt in his struggle towards the unification of the nomadic communities.

### Sharana Kumar Limbale's *Aakrama Santhaana*

The two Marathi autobiographies, *Uchlhalya* and *Gabaala* restrict

themselves purely to describing the nomadic clans while *Akkaramaashi* delineates the sad plight of those whose occupation is prostitution even to this day. They are painful narratives of unfortunate nomadic girls who live in tents and who are prey to the wealthy eagles. For that matter, if certain clans who have been traditionally nomadic were to settle down, we can see the reasons for the emergence of Dalit communities due to political and sociological and other related reasons. Limbale's autobiography, *Akkaramaashi*, translated from Marathi to Kannada as *Aakrama Santhaana* is his life-story as the son of an untouchable girl married to a Lingayat.

Published around the same time as the celebrated *Uppaara* by Lakshman Mane and *Uchhalya* by Giakwad, *Akkaramaashi* is alarming for here, the child of a socially unaccepted mixed-marriage comes face to face with anger, sympathy, abuse, frustration, exploitation and insult. The description of Limbale's childhood becomes the life story of any untouchable.

*"Hundred to two hundred children, both boys and girls and teachers from the Banajiga, Brahmin, Marwadi, Muslim, Ganiga, Talawara, Sonara and Maratha castes sat together in a circle under one banyan tree. But we Holeya and Madhiga boys of the outcaste communities sat under another tree. We started our meals after chanting a sloka but we never understood its meaning."*

Society, bred on the Vedic tradition of caste distinctions, has bound families in water-tight hierarchies. This autobiography of a child of a mixed marriage describes the ignominy and sorrow that children of the lowest class have to face.

When Lambale, as a boy, sat among boys of the Ganiga caste, the teacher dragged him out and slapped him on the cheek displaying caste discrimination. Not just that, he made the student sit at the door of the class humiliating him further.

Seeing their son and grandson participate in Prabhat Pheri, a protest march against injustice, on 15 August and 20 January, Limbale's mother and grandmother felt their lives had changed. The untouchables had to bathe at the lower end of the river. Whenever the writer cupped his hands and drank water downstream he would see women upstream washing

rags stained with blood from menstruation and excrement flowing towards him in clumps. He felt disgusted but drank it all the same with his mind as pure as unsullied water. Untouchable communities that flow from water-culture like Shudras consider water as divine and so Limbale had the grace to drink such polluted water. He writes:

*"Days were good when cattle died. The month dragged by when they did not die. We had to feed them ears of corn to kill them."*

*Akkaramaashi* relentlessly questions the feudal set-up in Indian society. The upper castes, in their inability to provide satisfactory answers, resort to instilling fear through physical torture.

*"How long can we live in isolation? Thanks to a Dharma that gives them caste-superiority and pride in ancestral wealth, the upper castes have a way of undermining the dignity of the Dalits. The landlords and Gowdas of the villages use the women labourers who farm their lands as their mistresses. Any poor girl-child who comes of age is a prey to their lust. There is a lineage born out of such a self-indulgent custom of the Gowdas. There are families that live to satisfy the carnal pleasures of the landlord. There houses are known as the Whore House. The children born of such a union are branded as the Children of the Landlord's Whore."*[24]

The writer, born of a Lingayat father and a Holeya mother finally lives under the loving care of his Muslim grandfather, Muhammad Dastagir Jamedhar. When he died, neither the Muslims nor the Holeyas came forward to bury him. Where could he be buried? Is there a graveyard to bury those who have risen above caste restrictions?

*"Why has such a vicious circle been created? Who established this or that ethical code? And why? Once my birth is considered unethical, which code should I follow as a child of a mixed marriage between an upper caste man and an untouchable woman?"*[25]

Such are the conundrums Limbale poses to his readers and to the socio-cultural system in the country.

Other important Marathi autobiographies like Shankar Rao Kharaatha's *Tharaala-Antharaala*, Namdev Whetakar's *Katha Maja Chinmaachi*,

Keshav Meshraam's *Hakikath Ani Jataayu,* Sonakaambale's *Aatavaaninchi Pakshi,* Madhava Kondavikala's *Mukkaamaposhta* and *Devaache Gotani,* Uthama Banduchupe's *Kaatyavarachi Pota,* Partha Polake's *Abharana* and Rustum Achala Kaambara's *Gavaki* that arose from similar contexts also describe the anguish of the lower castes. Though they are descriptions of various communities living in various parts of the state, yet they are histories of similar friction between social rules and regulations and social action and the communities that are supposed to benefit from them. They are humiliating images of an unscientific method of social integration.

The lack of similar creative output from the other states raises questions. More importantly, countless untouchable Dalits and nomadic communities have not even gained access to the debate on culture and society since they are illiterate and are, therefore, unaware of the potential of language. The first generation writers of the lower castes believe that the history of the country is waiting for the transitional phase when it will be re-written by Dalits, nomads and tribals who will, in time, unite to critically redefine what is now considered as Indian culture.

*"What is modern is in opposition to modernity. That is one of its important traits."*

Following the spurt of Dalit autobiographies from Maharashtra, there was a significant output of life stories from other states too. We need to discuss and explain the standards of social and cultural norms they used to bring out the opposition between the upper and lower castes.

From this point of view, Kannada Dalit personal autobiographies like Siddalingaiah's *Ooru-Keri,* Malagatti's *Government Brahmana,* Thumbadi Ramaiah's *Manegaara* and Devanooru Mahadeva's autobiographies of a community, *Kusuma Bale* and *Odalaala* are important contributions to be evaluated with the first Kannada play by a nomad, Balagurumurthy's *Budganaadha* that depicts nomadic culture. Together with the play is his autobiography, *Bayala Benneri,* yet to be published but serialized in the Kannada monthly, *Agni.* These writings are not only established in the literary tradition but also critically evaluated from the viewpoint of social science.

*Budganaadha* is an autobiographical play by a nomad dramatizing the life stories of nomads in Indian literature. Research documents concerning nomadic communities are available thanks to people with community consciousness, university research departments, the study of marginal cultures by the Central Sahitya Akademi and *Alemari Adhyayana Maale*, a collection of studies on nomads from authorized publishers.

Eminent scholars in the field like G.N.Devy, Meenaradhakrishna, Dr. A.S.Prabhakar, Cheluvaraju, K. M. Methri, Dr. H. C. Boralingaiah from the Department of Tribal Studies, Kannada University, Hampi have studied the nomads from different perspectives through their research.

But there are very few nomads who have contributed to creative writing in the field of poetry, drama, short story and the novel in Indian literature. In this context, *Budganaadha* is the first play in Kannada nomadic literature. *Budga* is used by the Budgajangama clan of nomads while singing their *burrakathe* or stories in song. Budgajangamas are specialists in singing burrakathes. The elder generations of men and women of the community have spent their entire life singing these story-songs. They worship the budga.

Burrakathe Eramma has sung many folk epics accompanied by the instruments used for budga sangeetha or songs sung with the budga. Though there are other singers like Eramma, it is left for us to research and document their songs through recordings. Eramma brought respect and dignity to her community that grew up under her influence. As a budga folk-artiste, she represented the culture of her people through her traditional singing by devoting herself not only to carrying on the tradition but also in helping the younger generation to experience face-to-face their specific traditional art-form of singing folk-songs. Often, in the context of analyzing and critiquing the oral and historical aspects, an individual may become the representative of his/her community.

**A.Hampate Ba, an African critic writes in *Living Tradition*:**

*"For some scholars, the whole problem is whether we can place the same trust in the oral as in the written, when it comes to evidence of things past; that is not*

*the way to put the problem. Written or oral evidence is in the end, only human evidence and it is worth what man is worth."*

## Balagurumurthy's play, *Budganaadha*

In this play, the dramatist investigates the situation wherein his nomadic clan is considered a marginalized community in this day and age. He also depicts the cultural barriers in the clan and the conflicts with mainstream society that keeps it apart.

*Budganaadha,* an oral-story attempting to display the artistic nature of Kannada, is a visual-poem depicting the lifestyle of the badgajangama clan that has wandered all over the country like a trail of ants.

After the invocatory prayer,

*Children of open-spaces who don't know how to write*
*Gananaatha*
*We sing only through the light of our memory*
*Gananaatha*
*Strumming wires made by our guts*
*Gananaatha*
*Mylaralinga of the Mountains*
*Gananaatha*[26]

the writer humbly expounds the limited nature of the oral narrative,

*I haven't seen seven towns or seven villages, I've grown up*
*``In a house of open spaces,*
*Sat in the outskirts of the hamlet, Malligepura,*
*Set out on the occupation of our clan.*
*Shiva's costume is on my shoulder,*
*Let not the story from my mouth lose its value,*
*Let me have the integrity of my clan at heart,*
*Let me get some food to feed my crying children.*
*If we want to drink water in the moonlight*
*The late-night light has to shine.''*[27]

Like the rooster that awakens the community, the ancestor, Munganna, alerts the writer to be true to their community beliefs and ethical core values. The play explains their different art-forms of acting out stories like, kelikes performed during the day, burrakathe and modiyaata.

Singing in the costume of Kondamaama...

*Kurukuru Kondamaamane*

*Myagala Thirupathi Govindharaja*

*Anjaneya of Mulabagalu*

*Gangeamma in Gounapalli*

*Annimma in Bengaluru*

He asks the spectators,

*"Wouldn't you like to hear*

*About your legal affairs, your home affairs,*

*Your child and your family?*

*Whether things will fructify or not?"*[28]

The play, Budganaadha describes the man dressed as Kondamaama as a character listening to the joys and sorrows of the villagers and offering them solace by telling them what they would like to hear.

In the burrakathe part of the play, the inner beauty of the folk-song is highlighted by describing the attitude of folk-communities that accept the culture of the Shudras with respect:

"She may swab the front yard with meat curry,

She may string up a thorana of small fish to adorn the front door

She may make a decorative rangoli with arrack-pots

But she fills the poison of caste with ethical integrity

She heals the upper caste people with herbs

She is the daughter of a poor mother, O Gangamma!

She is the shade in the village, O righteous Gangamma![29]

Though at one stage they seem like oral poems, they also clarify the aspirations of the community. In the Kolar district, all the lower caste communities have accepted the immeasurable influence of the mystic,

Kaivaara Nareyanappa. And so, as part of their lifestyle they sing the hymns of Kaivara Thatha, as he is fondly known, every morning before they engage in the community occupation for the day. There memory of Kaivaara Thatha is not only a remembrance of an individual creative artiste; it is a celebration of the values of joy and forbearance by validating the greatness of community life.

"The act of recollection is usually individual, but memory is always inserted in the social scenario of human life."[30]

The plot in the play unfolds the restrictions that restrain the lower castes in the story of how the upper castes with the mindset of middle men try in vain to ruin a brilliant young girl, Mungowri. But Mungowri, though aware of her traditional values and honouring the ethical stance of her community as belonging to the oppressed class, warns her society about their destitute condition and urges them to move on.

*"If you don't want me, I'll go. I'll sing a new song in a new world. I'll tell the future (kėlike). I build a new town, a new land, leaving this vast expanse of open land, this sunlight. This clan has not built a town as a nest for us like the people of this town. We have to stop living in settlements outside the towns, hanging our cradles on branches of trees and drinking. Instead we have to till the soil and reap a harvest."*[31]

*"Instead of wandering around hilly places and attracting spectators with tamed animals like the mongoose, the fox and the bear to earn a meager livelihood, our clan should live the values we sing, we hear, we teach,"* says Mungowri as she walks away in anger as a calf leaves its mother. And the elders of the community have this to say about her, *"Though this child is young in years, she dreams big for our clan, O Mother."*[32]

*``A bird that is meant to fly should not keep sitting on one branch; a bird that sings should not stay in one place.''*[33]

Instead of focusing only on a depiction of the lifestyle of nomads, the play also raises an important discussion on the question of their identity. *Budganaadha* is an autobiography of the nomads belonging to the budgajangama clan; it is not an imaginary literary creation. The creation stories and cultural details that embellish the play are magnificent.

## Notes

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4. Ibid, P.51
5. Ibid, P.59
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7. Laxman Gaikwad, Uchalya, 1994, P.3
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11. Ibid, P.92
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13. Ibid, P.125
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15. Balagarumurthy, Bayala Benneri, unpublished, P.5
16. Ibid, P.7
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21. Ibid, P.152
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25. Ibid, P.40
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27. Balagurumurthy, Budganaadha, 2010, P.17
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# ORAL TRADITION AND WRITTEN TRADITION: SOCIAL MANIFESTATIONS

1. Community Faiths of Individual Centric Expressions
2. Exposure of the Contraditctions

## Chapter 5

# ORAL TRADITION AND WRITTEN TRADITION: SOCIAL MANIFESTATIONS

### 1. Community Significations in Individual-centered Expressions

The folk mindset of rural communities has developed an abstract, mystical consciousness by listening to folk recitals of stories and poems and imbibing their values. Both the artistes who sing the songs in plays and the singers of hymns refer to their story-poem simply as *padha* or *haadu* i.e., song. Just as pithy utterances developed into *vachanas* or wisdom literature over time, even so, poems became songs or hymns to them. Philosophical songs discuss issues of life and death like philosophical discourses.

As small communities try to find metaphorical equivalents to the multifaceted world, we have creative forms of similitude. The social environment of the nomadic people is a witness to the influence that certain gifted minds had on their communities through their folk forms of entertainment like the Yakshagana of Dakshina Kannada and Bhajane and Kelike of Kolar.

The pain of enduring cultural restrictions in the immediate context takes on a façade in course of time, much like the scar on a wound that is healing. Thanks to politicization, the manifested culture has become a prerogative of the ruling classes.

*"Bharath is a country of villages. The cultural mindset that creates folk art is but a manifestation of the heart of the entire country. That is why the diversity of our folk-cultures provides us with a sense of unity at a deeper level."*[1] However disparate they may seem on the surface, the distinctive features do exhibit

an underlying similarity. But the extent of damage done to folk-art through the disastrous effects of globalization are so varied that they are not being discussed here; nevertheless, they cannot be ignored.

*"With the help of a historical review, one can see that the protective measures the primitive communities had taken strengthened the domination of the palegara or the local chieftain. Due to the latter's relentless control, the small communities lost their sense of security and suffered undue anxiety and strain. Under such circumstances, it was a stray genius or a creative artiste who detached himself from the despicable situation and helped the rest to move forward a little. There is a great chasm between the mindset of the rulers and that of the ruled."*[2]

In such a context, it is extremely illuminating to understand and appreciate the contributions made by the mystic folk-poet Manteswami who composed allusive poems of similitude and the sensitive mystic poet, Allama Prabhu.

In certain situations, the height of culture and refinement attained by the mystic, Kabir is not to be seen in any other strata of Indian society. He is the guru of all those who can care for others with an unconditional love, who can speak spontaneously from the heart like the poor among the lower classes, the marginalized communities, fakirs, nomads, Dalits. But those who are class and caste conscious have not given due prominence to Kabir's mystical genius.

In debates on the basic oneness of different forms of mysticism, the inner vision or humaneness required to discuss dispassionately the reason for the inherent hostility among different cultures is lacking. The cultural hegemony in the ambiance creates the rhetoric of liberation or 'uplifting'. For instance, in the novel *Chomana Dudi* by Shivaram Karanth, though the protagonist, Choma was seething like a furnace with impotent rage, he remembered his debt and became tongue-tied every time Manuel came to collect the dues. Choma became mute in the face of authority and suffered a spiritual self-immolation; his helplessness was visible in his eyes. And yet he sustained himself for as long as he could with the hopeless dream of buying a plot of land and bulls to plough and reap his own harvest, of becoming a farmer some day.

"It is a sense of social impotence in the down-trodden that goaded them towards aesthetic creativity. In the unique caste-based hierarchy of Indian society, the spiritual insights of the lower classes became deadened in their day to day struggle for survival. While on one hand the ruling classes exploited their wealth, on the other, the Vedic system of education of the upper castes undermined their cultural unity. A defeatist attitude was deliberately woven into the mindset of the people belonging to the lower rungs of the social structure; they began to be embarrassed with and to disown their origins and their cultural base."[3]

In Chinua Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart*, Nwoye, the son of the protagonist, Okonkwo, is used as a pawn by Western Christian missionaries to influence his people towards a Western way of life, thus spiritually killing the father. Being exposed to the Western mindset of white superiority, Nwoye thinks lowly of his tribe and denies his cultural antecedents. Any writer from the grass-roots cultures writing his autobiography may show a disregard for the cultural history of his community, describing with contempt the daily struggles of being born and surviving as a member of one of the lowest rungs of society. As he progresses in the Western brand of education, he begins compare his local environment with the global and finds it deficient. Aravind Malaghatti's *Government Brahmana* is a perfect delineation of such a character.

"Folklore is a conveyor of past memories into the present. It documents the cumulative wisdom of the ages and makes tradition relevant in the present."[4]

But we have also seen countless machinations throughout history whereby the local communities are pushed from an awareness of their self-worth towards its denial or invalidation. As a consequence, the nomadic communities, unlike the upper castes, not only failed to adhere to the rituals and regulations of their castes but also failed to preserve a highly disciplined system of rational thought to support them.

We have a long history of the ruling classes enjoying the benefits of tax levied on the common people. Countless tanks built by kings for the water-sport of their mistresses are in ruins. And the soldiers who died in

wars of acquisition were wrongly termed martyrs. This concept is still alive in the military. While, on the one side, stark poverty impels people to loot to survive; on the other, a large part of the budget is set aside for buying bombs. This imbalance is supported by a façade of a rationale behind it.

Epigrammatic compositions in simple poetic prose, known as *vachanas*, are the oral repositories of ancient wisdom handed down through the mystics among folk communities. These mystic leaders are the voice of culture speaking up for their oral tradition. The most well-known of them are Kaiwara Narenappa, Beriki Butteppa, Gatteppaswami, Manteswami, Jagalurajja, Nayakanahattiya Thippeswami, Ethappa, Junjappa and Gaadhripaalanayaka who with their countless followers have fought cultural battles against inroads into their established culture. In the context of the Vachana agitation, the prominent religious orders of Manteswami and Madeshwara from South Karnataka engaged in philosophical debates with Basavanna and his disciples from North Karnataka to give the wisdom of their experience a form as orderly meditations. Allama Prabhu was largely responsible for infusing the energy of spiritual detachment into the ritualistic practice of vedic doctrines. These mystics enabled doctrinal discordance to reach a point of harmony through renunciation.

Jagalurajja suffers persecution at the hands of Vaishnava devotees when he is on his way to Thirupathi to have a darshana of Govinda. Eventually, he does not get to worship Govinda in the temple. But Govinda himself comes out of the temple and gives darshana to Jagalurajja. Kanakadasa of Udipi too had a similar experience. Kanaka is a Shudra devotee of Krishna who is not allowed anywhere near the entrance of the temple. But Lord Krishna looks back to give dharshana to Kanaka who is standing at the back of the temple. This incident is historically documented as a mystical union between a devotee and his god.

Jagalurajja, as a mystic representative of the hunting tribe that lives in the jungles and make milk and curds, opposed social evils on their behalf. Another similar mystic was Kaiwara Narenappa, a poet whose folk lifestyle and poetic compositions called keerthanas preached against social injustice against the marginalized in society. But Thathayya, as Kaiwara

Narenappa was fondly known, not only repudiated the divisive religious practices of the higher social orders but also strove as the cultural representative of the Shudra communities to strengthen and validate the dignity of their way of life. All these mystics have manifested their spiritual ability to fight against religious discrimination and have committed their entire lives to fight against social evils.

The intrigue to overpower Jagalurajja from behind and kill him had religious sanction i.e., Thirupathi Venkateshwara came in the form of a woman and broke both his legs with a bow and arrow. Becoming valorous in the use of different kinds of weapons and a nightmare to the ruling class, Jagalurajja says to her, "Go and live! You are a woman; I can't kill you." Such unconditional humaneness is possible only in the native chieftains. Countless such great men who have struggled against orthodoxy have made similar sacrifices. Unfortunately, local traditions have not systematically documented such sacrifices. But folk artistes have kept such historic incidents alive in community memory through their oral poems.

Why does not the mainstream tradition revere Burrakathe Eramma as Mahakavi when she has breathed and sung such epics from memory all her life? It is due to the false sense of superiority created by caste-consciousness.

"Ours is a Veda, a religious knowledge that cannot be written; it is an interior Veda."[5]

The surprising fact is that strangers who have not contributed anything to society appear unexpectedly as religious leaders to be worshipped by the middle-class.

For instance, modern divine incarnations like Satyanarayana, Sai Baba, Ayyappa have pushed to the background our native mystics like Jagalurajja, Narenappa, Berike Butteppa, Manteswami and Gaadhripaalanayaka. This shows that the modern generation has moved away from our traditional history and looking elsewhere. The reasons for this attitude are neo-colonialism, globalization, industrialization, the English language and economic productivity. Nowadays, Marwadi swamijis are preaching a chilling penitential spirituality of destroying the soul through cruelty.

In this modern age when countless books are released and when an excellent book can disappear without a trace, these autobiographies, story-poems, historic legends of local cultural leaders may seem like smelling of native culture and the other religious sermons may seem like the storehouse of nationalization. In this kind of a caste-graded society the shelter of religion has been used to woo the lower castes to other religions. But we also see the increased fervor of those among the lower communities who have persevered in their vocation with religious zeal.

It is not only a reverence for their occupations in the past that is to be noted. It should be mentioned that certain communities like that of the *madivalas* or dhobis and *kshaurikas* or barbers consider even their present occupations of physical labour with respect. Dhobis who wash clothes stained with menstrual blood have the spiritual integrity to consider all things impure as pure. *'In the divine procession, let the warm clothes freshly washed by the washerman be spread on the ground that divinity may tread on it'* – such is the cleverness with which the caste has elevated its lowly profession. The practice of *ajalu* among the Koragas together with that of the barbers providing music with the *nadaswara* during auspicious celebrations, the sacred torches of the washermen, the drums of the Dalits, the *kelike* songs and dances of the nomads are incongruous and yet true aesthetic practices.

The spurt of religious protests against social inequality, probably during the interim period, focused on the hereafter more than the here and now and delivered the theme in the form of meditations. The main features of such meditations relating to the experiences of the common man were concerned with their attitude to heaven, the essence of devotion, the spirit of surrender and a yearning for god. In this context, it is worthy of note that the depressed classes, having no direct access to the system of Vedic knowledge, documented the truths of their home-spun wisdom in the form of stories for the ethical uplift of their communities. Many of the compositions documented for this purpose as traditional oral story-songs have become divine and religious symbols providing a face to the protest against contemporary forms of abuse. From this viewpoint, the stories of Balanagamma, Maarwaadishet, Syaasi Chinnamma, Kere Honnamma and

Krishnagolla and the poems of Balichakravarthy, Malemaadeshwara and Junjappa are significant.

When Eramma sings Syaasi Chinnamma's poem she raises a passionate voice on behalf of Chinnamma against exploitation manifest in women's everyday experiences. Here Eramma, having endured suffering and ignominy personally, becomes the representative voice of all women belonging to nomadic communities. The tears of Chinnamma who suffered through malice in her own family environment, rise out of Eramma's voice thus:

> Let's cut the hedges to the god who has given, Rama, Rama
> Let's light the fires to the god who has given, Rama, Rama
> Instead of creating me as a girl-child, Rama, Rama
> Why didn't you make me a tree by the wayside, Rama, Rama?
> Why did you give life, Rama, Rama?[6]

The repetitive expression, *Rama, Rama*, becomes evocative as the poet calls upon god and religion helplessly with yearning even as her heart burns with pain, anger and frustration. And in the same context, it highlights the contradiction between religious principles and practice that bring conflicts into social relationships. Specifically, it provides new insights into the differences between the beliefs in the Shaivite and Vashnavite sects.

But when Eramma sings Syaasi Chinnamma's poems, she is concerned with the anguish of women and not with the for- and-against stand between Shaivites and Vaishnavites. As for the audience gathered in the pandal wherever Eramma sang, the melody of the song became important; not Eramma's grieving spirit:

> Whatever the great do is stupid,
> You stupid One, You stupid One!
> The stupid has to reign
> The stupid has to reign; whatever the stupid has done
> Whether he be of high caste or he be lame
> .....
> I want you to serve me the cat-meat daily. I want you to serve me.

Or else you have to serve me ..... (mingilanaagi)

.....

.....

Who's there who don't eat worms? Who's there? Who's there?

In this world that shows no sweetness, who am I? Who am I?

Eramma vehemently rebukes the worldly illusion that cheating, hypocrisy and lies are special qualities. Writers from Akramasanthaana, Uchhalya and Gondhaligya communities arouse themselves to criticize the same social consciousness in their writings. But quite a few nomadic artistes like Eramma condemn society from the stand-point of their personal experience.

The manner in which autobiographies have been received has been explained in the previous chapters. They have been accepted from various stand-points by Indian society. Traditionally, an autobiography can be generally described as the life-story of a person's life-story documenting his / her experiences and observations. The popular definition is an account of a person's life written by himself / herself. But the validity of the generally accepted view of autobiography as a genre comes into question while analyzing specific autobiographies.

## 2. Unveiling Contradictions

Gandhiji calls his autobiography *My Experiments with Truth* instead of captioning it, My Story.

His preoccupation is with experimenting and truth; his life-story is incidental. In Gandhiji's autobiographic the puranic confronts the present in certain ways. His autobiography has also been considered as the autobiography of Indian society. Discussions of this kind provide countless perspectives. Many detractors hold, even to this day, that Gandhiji's work has moved to a reality beyond the ideal. The values he investigated like truth, non-violence, fasting and abstinence were values that arose in the context of non-violent protests against the British and so his study would naturally seem biased to his critics as well as his disciples. Gandhiji contemplates on Truth accepting its value as based on the Puranic

delineation of Truth. He narrates how he was influenced by Harishchandra's commitment to Truth after seeing the play, *Harishchandra*. Thus he accepts into his life the concept of Truth as reflected in the blessed world of Harishchandra, Vishwamitra and Vasishta. But he does not see the values of self-control or non-violence in the world of the Puranas; nor does he look for them. For that matter, the Puranas are replete with war, persecution and blood-shed. But at a personal level Gandhiji demonstrates both self-control and non-violence and investigates on them throughout his life. He considers famous people as models at different stages of his life. He has been influenced by Aurobindo, Leo Tolstoy and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa in different ways. This implies that together with the values gleaned from the Puranas and history, Gandhiji also imbibed the values of great minds and made them his own. Though history and the Puranas are the repositories of countless value, he selected only those that appealed to him. The influence of Gandhiji's life in expounding these values and following them in his life was not the life of an individual because his life was that of a social being, living the life of all communities. For this reason, even he says that, at a specific stage in life, the individual becomes a group, a community with no difference between his personal life and his public life. It seems as if Gandhiji's stand was that if a person thought his personal and public lives were different, then the values he was committed to and practiced could not be two sides of the same coin.

"Living beings are disorderly but their thoughts always manifest themselves in orderly forms."[7]

To continue, there are some dimensions to be considered while explaining 'Truth' as an ethical value. For instance, there has been considerable critical documentation on Raghavanka's *Harishchandra Kavya* on 'Truth' in his poem: Is it merely a word? An imagination? A thought? An intention? Could the gamut of its manifestations be contained in an expression? Critics have debates these issues even in the light of protest literature.

Curiously, Gandhiji could have titles his opus as *My Story*. But in naming it *My Experiments with Truth,* he offers the results of his

investigations as social values valid as a model for the ethical base of his generation. Thus, *My Experiments with Truth* becomes simultaneously, Gandhiji's autobiography as well as the autobiographies of all those who belong to his age. An individual's life and writing has become an expression of the collective consciousness of his times transcending personal expression to become a social narrative.

Even before Gandhiji, Maxim Gorky of Russia describes his autobiography as *Amidst People, My Childhood, My University.* It is noteworthy that he deliberately rejected referring to is as *his* life-story. On the other hand, Lankesh's autobiography, *Huli Maavina Mara* (The Sour Mango Tree), is purely an individual-centered life-story. In this case, the writer sees the world subjectively as part of his consciousness. How can the individual consider himself as part of a collective consciousness?

If the autobiographies of Gandhiji and Gorky are individual-denying narratives, Lankesh's is an individual-oriented life-story. But ultimately, every narrative of this kind arises from its social milieu as it describes not only the life of the writer but also factors in his family, his environment, his friends and his social context. It therefore begs the question: how far is an autobiography purely the life-story of an individual? Certain passages from F.R.Leavis' Practical Criticism prescribed for study in colleges provide models. In the context of New Writing, some writers critique his methods while others support them. On one level, the validity of Lewis' dictum, 'Trust the tale and not the author' is questioned. According to Gandhiji's intention in deliberately entitling his life-history as *My Experiments with Truth,* truth is social and people confront it while reflecting on it and investigating its validity in social contexts. As B.M.Puttaiah explains it:

*"The question is whether an autobiography is supported by an individual base or a community base. If it is from a community base, it voices the expectations of the community. If it is based on an individual it expresses the intentions of the writer. But it is society that declares it the voice of an individual. Therefore, though at one level, the subjectivity in an autobiography may arise from the desire of the author to write about himself; at another level, it also originates from his social context, or the two viewpoints support each other. An autobiography cannot be said to be a story of everything that actually happened."*[8]

According to B.M.Puttaiah's analysis, *"Many autobiographies are known to have documented countless naked truths. In Siddalingaiah's Ooru-Keri a few portions on personal confrontations are also about social conflicts. He does not document or elaborate on certain aspects of the direction the conflicts took either during or after the confrontations due to certain reasons he has proffered or due to certain other inexplicable reasons. Here, the deliberate intention of a writer not to include information that might be unimportant or embarrassing is not due to the logical reasons of forgetfulness or lack of clarity. Rather, it is a justifiable response from a person who considers himself a distinctive role-model in the context of the severity of the inner and outer restrictions imposed on the community."*[9]

Navya writers reject individual-centered investigations in favour of formalist criticism and prominent writers like Lankesh and Purnachandra Tejasvi clarify such a stand.

From this viewpoint, it may be argued that Kamala Das' autobiography and Amrita Pritam's *Receipt Ticket* cannot be evaluated by writer-centered criticism. To explain this stand clearly, the problem these women writers write about are not concerning a woman *per se* but in her encounter with family, husband, children, lover... society at large.

Similarly, not all the creative writing that has been documented is merely personal, born out of personal conviction. An analysis of many autobiographies reveals that they are contextual social sentiment voiced by individuals. In his study of one of tribes, the Haalakki Okkaliga community, M.Chidananda Murthy make a significant observation.

The statement is true that the *hagarana* or their form of dance-drama is also a *pagarana* or dissembling. The Haalakki agricultural community congregates once a year to celebrate the day with costume and paint. Though the costumes of animals, birds, ancestors and current politicians bring out the joy of communal togetherness, they also reverberate with the unspoken anguish endured by the community in countering victimization. Some of the costumes are of weeping faces with the actors crying aloud, ululating. If so, what could such folk dance-drama be called? Is it story-recital, poem, devotional song, parody, satire or political satire? Dr. A.S

Prabhakar, an expert on tribes, describes them as the political representation of a community. Such practices can be seen among countless tribal communities. Similarly, is Veerasindur's *Lakshmana,* a popular play in North Karnataka, a poem, a lavani or ballad, a devotional or the story of a martyr? Cultural criticism analyses this aspect in depth.

*Budganaadha,* by Balagurumurthy, is, in fact, an autobiography of the tribal world. The story-line of the poetic-drama is interspersed with soliloquies describing the lifestyle of the Budgajangama community that lives outside the city limits amid boulders and hills and comes into towns and cities to exhibit its art-forms through the songs the performers sing, like the folk-epics of burrakathe, modiyaata and the devotional songs of kelike. This research document has noted them earlier. *"In a manner of speaking, there is no respite for the musical quality and interiority of folk-songs. Though specialists in the tradition of poetry may differentiate between oral and written literature, both forms spring from the social context of the community."*[10]

Siddalingaiah's *Ooru-Keri* testifies to the wretched lives of the Dalits by exemplifying his father, Dyavanna's situation when he dragged the yoke in place of a bull to plough his landlord's land and the way his mother applied warm oil to his shoulders to soothe the welts when he returned home in the evening. The writer poignantly reflects on their condition in his description of hungry bellies staring at the filth-ridden water of a sewer in Sri Rampura, looking intently with bright eyes for a world of dreams. He questions the principles of Indian politics when the first generation learners among the Dalits wait in vain for the visit of a minister to their settlement and their inhuman plight of having to wait on and on.

In his autobiography *Government Brahmana,* Aravinda Maalaghatti describes a distressful ritual in which coins are thrown on a corpse during a funeral procession and picked up from the feet of the pall-bearers and the mourners following the bier. This is not merely an episode in a personal life-story. It becomes the story of an abused community in its seething comment on a social context that perpetrated such a practice and the intentions of the participants in that hierarchical caste structure who perpetuate it.

In the chapter entitled, *Naalina Kasadha Paali*,a teacher, gnashing his teeth, whacks the writer as a child saying, "You son of a whore, look at your buttocks! They're well-rounded enough to beat the drum, what with you eating uppittu."

His story that begins like a poem, *Mark's Vaadha matthu Enjalu Thatte*, is a description of the community's mindset:

Boy,
You worm of reservation,
With a plate without any meat, any bones,
This is festive food
Cooked in ghee
Made in milk.
Smell its aroma.
Is it good?
Alas! It smells of asafetida!

*"He used to say, 'You have to walk shoulder to shoulder with progressive-minded people. Two different hands have to come together to clap. You have to write the revolution for collectiveness with us. And mere writing won't do, my boy. Your action should be according to your words.' As I had already been stamped with the impression that he was an elder, experienced writer who cared for the Dalits, I would say, 'Yes Sir!'"*[11]

This document of an educated Dalit narrating the stress he experienced through embarrassment and disgrace while dealing with the upper castes in a caste-ridden society is an individual-centered episode transferred into a community-centered record simultaneously. It becomes an expression of the community's pain and ignominy. Though the fret and fume against abusive situations is individual-centered at the hub, it radiates to embrace the community in the periphery.

As explained earlier, in a narrative like Aravinda Maalaghatti's *Government Brahmana*, on the one hand, the writer has to write about disgusting / insulting episodes with detachment because he confronts the need to expostulate a theoretical base, moving from the particular to the

general; he is not merely recording or detailing an isolated abusive situation. And yet on the other, the writer may strike a compromise by keeping his narrative at a personal level so as not to upset either his community or society at large. Though the general principle is that 'life should be an open book', autobiographers claim that this is not always possible in practice. Aravinda Maalaghatti too subscribes to this view towards the conclusion of his life-story.

*"I had argued with my friends that life should be an open book. But a majority of them argued that this is not possible. 'Why isn't it possible? If so, what is the meaning of honesty?' Though a few such questions did bother me, I was determined to prove my friends wrong and so I have laid bare my own life-story before them. But my work pressurizes me to underscore that 'life is not an open book' in this narrative. The episodes that I have disclosed among intimate friends have been used to blackmail me. When I see such people I groan. Perhaps it is because of such unpleasant situations which you neither can swallow not spit out that people tend to write their life-stories when their hair is graying and they feel they are closer to death."*[12]

This is expressive of an individual's conflicts. But why did not Gandhiji experience such inconsistency? This does not imply that Gandhiji is being compared to Maalaghatti; as individuals both are equal. But whenever an individual-based writing is impelled by communal or social concerns, the voice of the individual is unconsciously absorbed into the voice of the community or social group.

Generally, literature or any other form of art is an expression of the social ethos of the time. Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Ernest Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea* are novels that substantiate this dictum.

The ghazals sung by Hindustani musicians are creations based on the ideologies of different gharanas. Though initially they came to India as courtly Persian poetry, later they was so deeply influenced and reformulated by Urdu as to belong to different gharanas.

Some fifty to sixty years earlier, our local forms of folk drama like bayalaata, dollina pada, and kelike were just as popular as the ghazals. This implies that the music of the gharanas too is a sophisticated creation of its social milieu.

This is what T.S.Eliot says in his famous essay on criticism, Tradition and Individual Talent where he explains the relationship between a poet and his tradition. He speaks of a fusion of the past and the present existing simultaneously with a sense of the present. A poet engaged in a new work cannot deny the influence of past tradition on his poem. In fact, his new work alters the existing order of the past making it to accommodate the new; the new gives the old a new meaning. Thus the individual mind of the poet is absorbed into the mind of the past.

Eliot introduced the Metaphysical poets of the 16th century like John Donne and Andrew Marvel. This shows that a brilliant poet may be able to see a viable connection between the present and some period in the past and draws inspiration from it.

Similarly, there are Kannada dramatists like Girish Karnad and Chandrashekara Kambhara who have reinterpreted ancient puranic and folk myths to show their relevance in the present. For that matter, there are many brilliant minds who demonstrate the meaning of justice in their social context through puranic myth. K.V.Puttappa, famous as Kuvempu, has effectively responded to the Vedic tradition through such works as *Shudhra Thapasvi, Jalagaara, Beralge Koral.*

Dronacharya of *Mahabharatha*, a spokesman of Vedic principles, does not reject Ekalavya at the personal level. But, as a mere representative of society who had a prior agreement with the ruler and had to please him, he helplessly claims Ekalavya's thumb as a symbolic gift to the teacher. The play, *Beralge Koral* confronts the practice among the ruling and vedic authorities in the forest culture of the primitive nomadic Adhivaasi tribes of sacrificing a boy-hunter. Though *Beral Koral* is a type of written literature, it is in truth an autobiography of a scheduled tribe. Here Ekalavya becomes the voice of Indian culture in the way he is completely in control when he taunts Arjuna and confronts him honestly and humanely. *Beralge Koral* simultaneously moves from an individual to a socio - community perspective and from individuality to a collective base in reinterpreting tradition. It churns tradition to create a metamorphosis of philosophy into a powerful basis with radiant new meanings. This is how an individual writer revitalizes tradition instead if distancing himself from it.

In the field of Indian sociology, some works of creative writing have been analyzed through sociological criticism. One example of such a critical perspective is Irawati Karve's *Yugaantha.*

K.B.Siddaiah's poems *Bakaala* and *Gallebaani* reveal the Maathanga culture of Adhijaambas. The whole of *Gallebaani* is an analysis of the culture of the community. From its creation stories it churns out a vision of freedom from a world of demeaning community labour to a tradition of personal dignity.

It seems pointless to label a creative writer's literary output as belonging to a specific category and also improper and inadequate to slot creative writing under exclusive titles. At a certain stage the practice of classifying even written folk literature can be questioned.

*"We have a mistaken notion that only the Ramayana and Mahabharatha are the great epics of our country. Such a blinkered view of our culture as being monolithic is because these poems are supposed to be representative of the ethos of our country. But a study of the differing world-views of our grass-roots cultures demonstrates not only the multi-cultural nature of Indian society but also the significant differences between cultures."*[13]

The gods of the oral communities like Malemadeshwara, Manteswami, Ethappa, Junjappa, Sharabandharaaja, Maalingaraya, Gaadhripaalanayaka, Kumararama, Ellamma, Kaatamaraaya and Sevalal come face to face with the icons of written literature, Rama, Krishna and Shiva. Thanks to the advent of anthropology certain clans have been stabilized, and through socialization and refinement have been tranformed from a primitive to an agrarian culture by working in fields and tending cattle.

From this viewpoint, some folk-poems are considered as the oral history of tribal communities. ``Oral stories are the basis for written epics in many cultures of the world. Breaking away from the tribal tradition at some point, the folk-songs came to be known as oral poems at one stage and as written poems at another. That is how Ramayana and Mahabharatha were considered as written epics while songs from other folk communities were forgotten. But the poems of Manteswami, Ethappa, Junjappa and Gaadhripaalanayaka have survived as songs that depict the cultural life of

their clans. From this perspective it would be considered incorrect to categorize literary forms and other artistic manifestations as written folklore."[14]

Kuvempu, a famous poet of the Navya School is undoubtedly the most brilliant mind in Kannada. His method of critiquing Vedic tradition made a whole generation aware of their identity and has brought a new understanding of Kannada Literature. The way he has analyzed social inequality, caste-based hierarchy, the impact of the priestly control of purohits and the ignorance arising out of the dark world of the Shudras have made him one of the most significant writers in the world. His *Malegalalli Madumagalu* and *Ḳaanooru Subbamma Heggadithi* depict his concern for the desecration of the lifestyle and environment of Malnad in the name of development.

Around the same time, an illiterate woman from a tribal nomadic community, Eramma pines for the abuse of environment through her repertoire of oral songs as evocatively as Kuvempu. Since the sentiments expressed in the aesthetic creations of both the great folk-artiste and the sublime poet are the same, it would be disgraceful to consider the former as folk and the latter as literary. In this regard Ki. Rum. Nagaraju can be considered as the sage of oral literature:

*"The nomadic singers who sing the oral narrative-poems of Syasi Chinnamma (famous in Telugu as Saasalu Sinnamma), Balanagamma, Krishnagolla, Maarwadishet, Babbali Nagireddy, and the stories of Yellamma and Gaadripaalanayaka do not consider them as stories; they deem them verse. And among the folk communities verse is subsumed under songs. Dr. A.S.Prabhakar, in his* Stories of Myasabedaru *says, 'Throughout the Introduction, I shall refer to the stories as epics.' As we proceed, we see that Dr. Rahamath Tharikere says, in his* The Sufis of Karnataka, *'If we have to draw a line between the written and oral literature of mystics, it will have to be a very thin line.' On the whole, in the understanding of this writing, every (literary) expression conforms to an order of life and as such is a life-story."*[15]

The purpose of this research into the twin traditions of oral and written literatures among nomadic tribes is not so much to trace the

traditional differences between the two genres but to find similarities of intent. And from this perspective the oral creations of nomadic clans, larger in output than the written, are considered to be autobiographical. To complement this assertion, most of the songs sung by reputed nomadic singers in the oral tradition have been understood in the light of their special ability to weave an autobiographical element into the story to make it also a life-story.

Before establishing that the poems of Balanagamma, Syasi Chinnamma and Krishnagolla are a valuable contribution to an important phase in nomadic literature, it has to be affirmed that these poems were originally from Eramma's oral repertoire of songs. And though it is laudable that certain experts in nomadic literature do recognize them as Earamma's songs, in all honesty we need to assess her contributions in terms of the larger social context of mainstream literature.

Similarly the *Myasabedara Kathana* sung by Palamma and her companions can be considered as a set of personal life-stories. Each episode in the longer narrative is in itself an incident analyzing the different aspects of their lives and longings. This research document attempts to study the life-stories embedded in the nomadic songs of Manteswami, Madeshwara and Gaadripaalaka sung by singers of nomadic origin like Mahadevayya, Hebni Mahadevaiah and Palamma respectively. Generally, there is a tone of irreverence while writing or reading about daily life in the style of casual conversation. They sound as discordant notes in both oral and written literature. For that matter, we can ask ourselves what else the love and concern the illiterate Saalumaradha Thimakka displays for the avenues of trees she planted and tended on the highways and the relationship it manifests between a woman and her trees could be if it is not her life-story.

Thomas Hardy's *Return of the Native* can be considered his autobiography for the love with which he describes the place, Egdon Heath as if it were a character in the novel around which the lives of the protagonists are interwoven. In such novels the autobiographical element is organically enmeshed. In Masanobu Fukuoka's *The One Straw Revolution*, the intention of a community life-story flows with ease. Similarly, Devanoor

Mahadeva's *Odalaala* and *Kusumabaale,* Samuel Becket's *Waiting for Godot* and the soliloquies of Paul Morrel, the protagonist in D.H.Lawremce's *Sons and Lovers* could be deemed autobiographical. These narratives move from a personal base to completely envelop a community base to become stories of the communities they describe.

Though Balagurumurthy's *Budganaadha* is called a play, it is in reality a soliloquy of the entire nomadic community. The essence of the work being the lives of the nomadic people, it portrays the life-story of the nomadic clans and does not at any point appear to be the story of a single person, the dramatist. Here the writer and his individuality become secondary. The words of the characters, Shinnanta, Mungowri and Raathgudha can be analyzed from this perspective:

*I haven't seen seven towns or seven villages. I grew up in a home of open spaces*

*I sat in the hamlet of Mallagipura*
*I've set out for the occupation of our clan*
*The costume of Shiva is on my shoulder*
*Let not the words of my mouth lose their worth*
*Let the dignity of my clan be in my heart*
*Let me earn enough to feed my weeping children*

Continuing in this manner, the dramatist narrates the story of the journey of the nomads:

I am footsore with continuous walking
Making God to sing me a lullaby
I've tied my menstrual cloth to my feet
Though I am bleeding
I won't stop my journey
Absorbing the water of the tank, of the canal, of forgetfulness
I hold the trident like Veerabhadra
If Kaateramma comes in the dark
I'll ...?

*"The life that holds a dagger and climbs the fort should not sleep like shed pubic hair, my child. Once it rained and rained and the embankment burst and water overflowed for forty miles and washed away ... our houses. And even then this Raathgudha Mama gritted his teeth, looked at the lightening flashing in the sky and filled us with courage."*[16]

The excerpt quoted above describes a situation in which a nomadic clan gets drenched in the rain.

Conventionally, the composers of puranic stories and epics attribute them to divine inspiration. But Kuvempu attributes his *Ramayandharshanam* to himself displaying pride in his self-worth: *'This epic composed by Kuvempu'*. A discussion on the change in convention moves beyond literary criticism into the realms of philosophy. Just as the waters from rivers renounce their individual identity to merge with the entirety of the sea.

We are socially familiar with poets with a traditional hierarchical mindset experimenting with modern forms and those in traditional forms celebrating modernity.

Shivaram Karanth's *Chomana Dudi* is the autobiography of the untouchables. One can critique Frantz Fanon's expression, *Black Skin White Masks* to comment on the cultural consequences of de-colonization during the phase of colonialism and post-colonialism.

On the whole, this research into stories and life-stories attempts to demonstrate that the oral poems of the nomadic communities and their written equivalents published in other languages from other regions are but different manifestations of the autobiographies of nomads.

## Notes

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# SOCIAL VISION OF SELF NARRATIVES

1. Self- Narratives of Nomadic Tribes : Nature of Social Vision
2. Satire against Feudal System
3. Qualms for the Rise New-man and New-Society

## Chapter 6

# SOCIAL VISION OF SELF NARRATIVES

### 6.1 Self- Narratives of Nomadic Tribes : Nature of Social Vision

At various stages of oral narratives, the language employed for narration is found to be very simple and that of the common man. Hence, it is quite natural that we came across the language which is simple and direct, we came across this type of language in the folk epics like Balanagamma, Krishna GollaraKavya (The epic of Krishna Gollas) Marwadishet, and SyasiChinnamam, which are sung by Eramma. The reason for this is the limitations of the day to day language. But which expressing feelings language never seems a problem for Eramma. Be if the epics sung by Eramma or the oral narratives in general, they all bear direct and living contact with the general folk. But those who have studied the learned language and who have composed their work only in the language of the library are likely to face some problems. At such a point one quite comfortably feels the oral epics to be more creative than the respectable compositions. But, when viewed from the respectable point of view these narratives naturally appear rather direct and dry.

The critics of Bendre D.R., many times, say that he copied many things from folk literature. But that appears a childish view. The language of the North Karnataka, with its peculiar rhythm and phraseology became a composite creative medium of expression of Bendre. Eramma got connected with Burrakatha because of her community profession and sang it for community. And because of her, the song became immortal and got saved for posterity. Because of self-realization and continuous contemplation of sublimity a creative work or work of art comes into being.

Most importantly in the contemplation of the characters of the epics that are presented by Eramma through songs the ways of the world that get established in the process of institutionalization get accepted and appropriated. In the **'KumaraRama'** epic there are innumerable instances of protest against systematic political intrigue. This may be witnessed in the narration about ratnaji, in the persecution of siridevi by Kamboji king or in the case of syacsichinnamma (Chinnamma).

In the classic version of the **'KumaraRama'** epic Ratnaji does not meet with death on the contrary **'KumaraRama'** himself dies, and Ratnaji is put to death. But in the song of **'KumaraRama'** sung by Eramma, Ratnaji is born as Hussini of Delhi to take revenge 'against Man's ego or ' 'Patriarchy', and thereby leaves instrumental in bringing about the death of **'KumaraRama'** Such sensibilities do not make their appearance in the classic version of the song.

Kamboji King does not get children/issues inspite of his having seven wives. At such a point of narration Eramma breathes a flash of humanity with the help of poetry. She says to Kamboji King, "You must come down from your position of power/authority and live in your own sweat like a lively labourer, plant the trees, contribute something to environmental development and be instrumental in bringing about the Welfare of the general public.

"Yourself with your wives seven
You must hold the crowbars;
To each of your wives seven,
And also pots seven,
To the roads of towns three
You must plant forest three
You must diga knee-deep pit
And is all of them sow the seed fit
There must appear in your hand blisters
For holding the crowbars;
And the drops of sweat from your eye-brows

Must fall to earth to wet it,
So that the seeds must sprout
Then you must watch the plant
Grow into a tree vibrant
They must all bear fine flowers
For shivalinga at Shivaratri
No fruits must be plucked
No fruits must be trucked
They all must nature on tree
They all must fall from tree
The fallen fruits must emit fragrance
Beyond the seven-seas' distance,
To attract the parrots and Cuckoo"[1]

The life story of Ratnaji in the poetry of **'KumaraRama'** would have been brought to an end but Eramma doesn't do so. She re-creates her (Ratnaji) characters. This is perhaps because of her desire for the binary expression of materialism. Thus Eramma contemplates feminine sensibility quite creatively in the study patriarchal society. Though Eramma is full of critical and contemptuous stance towards Ratnaji gradually she beemes sympathetic towards her character. This kind of shift in her opinion, it seems, is because of the fact that Eramma is also a woman and naturally she develops sympathy for the character of Ratnaji.

Kamboja King, who is a representative of egotist regal and feudal system, comes down from the centre of authority to the periphery or margin. At such a point Eramma introduces him to the interior of the 'Nomadic Life':

'Day and night you must walk
Without shoe or sandal to your feet,
Without shade and umbrella neet,
Without a galloping Stallation;
You must learn to shown

Worldly affairs at Varanasi

Linga of Kashi must came to Tirupati'

By the time Kamboji King renounces his mask of royal personage and learns the importance of work / labour culture. Thus Eramma contemplates the progressive idea that the rise of society of equality is possible only through such ideas. This kind of approach might be termed as bird's eye-view of the inner and outer aspects of the social vision of the nomadics. While singing the poetry of **'KumaraRama'** Eramma offers the description in such a way that she seems to have accepted the feudal system to some extent. She also appeals to accept and endorse the already accepted and established values. But at the same time she opposes the kind of social order and desires for the upcoming of a new society on the principles of equality. At some stage through she appears to endorse and uphold the feudal system by re-creating the character of Ratnaji she becomes face to face with the system.

Though, at a point of narration Eramma seems to accept the glorious feudal system. She satirizes it by asking him (Kamboja King) to come down from his position of power to comprehend the value and glory of the labour culture. Above all this, she humanizes him or teaches him the lessons of humanity.

In the poetry of SyasiChinnamma also the same main motif is foregrounded. Even the characters and situations, that we encounter in the creation myths of various nomadic tribes reveal a tendency to refuse the stratification or disparity, which is the result of stratification and unveil the natural human relationships.

## Social Vision of the Self Narratives of Nomadics

Dynamism is a natural and interest element of any living society. Dynamism is also a natural feature of liveliness. Various communities of India have opened themselves to various changes continuously and have contributed quite considerably to the history of this nation. History has changed its form in the course of the journey of communities from the Tribal stageof storing the food to the contemporary modern times. History does not get created by itself or it does not come into being by itself but

on the contrary man formulates it through his motility or mobility. Society was not completely formed during the stage of storage of food. The human society of this period did not have the features that are considered to be systematic in our contemporary days. Man depended on the forests for his needs. Human activities like collection of food and other world activities took place in the lap of nature. Further as no collective effort of primitive man did not form his daily life, automatically the existed neither professional contact nor formation of implements that made the profession possible. Though work is possible through the exertion of physical energy man of that period had not invented the implements through which he could apply his energy skillfully. And eventually, for the man of this stage, it was not possible to produce food from any source. Because of this reason there was necessity for storage of food. And further as the process of storage is not a collective job the professional contact was not formed. At this stage man was naturally a lonely creature.

However, during the phase of hunting, man began to form very little gregariousness that was needed to face the vagaries of nature. But the social group of man during the hunting phase stopped at a primitive republic kind of system sine the production relations needed to nurture this gregariousness were not strong. During this stage, man began to obtain food through hunting along with food gathering. Man began to design the means for producing food. The production relations in this phase of republican society were weak, and were natural. That is, the process of labour was not subjected to rules. The man of the hunting phase obtained one's food as naturally as a tiger pounced upon a deer and shared the raw meat with its family. The food gathered in the republican system of human society was shared, though not equally, according to one's need. Nothing would remain of the food gathered. If food did get left behind, the ingredients needed to preserve it had not been invented then. "Human beings - who live by gathering grains, fruits or by hunting animals found commonly in nature - gather into small groups. This is required for the sake of protection. Besides, since it is not possible to say that everyday each individual secures food that is sufficient for oneself, those who can secure more food on some days share the excess food they have with those who could not obtain it. If it should be possible to use the excess

food in the forthcoming days, they must know the methods of suitably processing and preserving such food. Since people did not have such knowledge then, the need to share food would definitely arise."[1]Moreover, there was no possibility of the food gathered becoming the property of a group or an individual. In the society of this phase, man and woman were natural beings belonging to nature. The mother was the only symbol of identity for children. The sexual relations between man and woman were not subjected to norms. The child would acquire the social character of the mother naturally, and, in those days, social character of society meant the woman who forms within her the human being required for the continuation of society. The woman who gives life to another being through her tremendous strength and perseverance has the same mysterious and extraordinary power that nature has.

The society of those times integrated nature and woman and comprehended them together. It is due to such comprehension that the society of this phase got acquainted with the worldly qualities of nature and human capability. This understanding made the society of the republic phase to form concepts of community and spirituality. Kosambi analyses the significance that a woman has in such a society as follows:"In this system, only motherhood has importance and fatherhood has no significance. Instead of calling this maternal domination, it would be more appropriate to call it matriarchy or matriarchal tradition. An individual is recognised through the mother and not the father. Since nature is fertile like a mother who bears children, nature is referred to as a goddess. All the goddesses of the stone age are women".[2] Woman and Nature who help Man's reproduction and continuation of lineage were the centres of this phase of society. Naturally, these centres were worshipped. Since the implements used for toiling were simple during this phase the produce of labour too was limited and the produce of labour was distributed equally among the members of the republic. Hence the labour of the community was distributed among the members of the republic according to their needs. There was no inequality and discrimination in the process of labour. "In this phase, it was not possible for the concept of private property, having slaves or the idea of a kingdom to exist. Whatever Man

produced, hunted or used was all done collectively. This was because Man was very weak in the single-handed fight against nature".[3]

Later, the process of producing food in the hunting phase began involving another process. Man began to tame animals that do not harm and are not dangerous and took animals under one's control. For the first time Man became the 'owner' of animals in society. Animals were tamed and they became the means of fulfilling Man's needs. The members of the republic who hunted started to rear the tamed animals, along with their hunting. Man found out pots in order to store milk and animal products obtained from the tamed animals. Fire, which cooked food making it tasty during the phase of hunting, opened to various discoveries during the animal rearing phase. Amruta Dange explains the miracles that the use of fire caused during this phase of human society as follows: "A new era was inaugurated suddenly in the life of Man when fire stepped into Man's house, when Man took animals as companions and learnt various uses of their milk, meat, skin and bones".[4] The stone implements used during the hunting phase were not quite improved. Hence, production was limited. But during the phase of animal husbandry, the use of fire compelled Man to find out different types of implements for working. The use of copper and bronze changed the very nature of work of Man during this phase. Besides, mud pots used for storing food too brought a major shift in production by Man. Also, for the first time, the members of the society of the republic considered labour as a communitarian activity of a republic. This way of considering work as a communitarian activity regulated the work done by the society of the republic. The elders of the society of the republic came forward to determine the effort put by Man for communitarian labour. The effort put for labour was divided and the distribution of labour became subjected to norms. In other words, the effort of the Man who produces began to form community relations. The relations in the republic got centralised due to labour. The material relations of Man increased along with spiritual relations. Nature, woman and pots used to store food which was produced started to gain importance in the domain of worship.

The republican society, that is the tribal society, had attained its

ideal state during the phase of animal husbandry. There was considerable development in the nature of the implements that supplemented labour. Copper and bronze came to be used. There was significant improvement in production. But, the surplus produced did not become any individual's property. It existed under the ownership of the community. Though the division of labour was subjected to norms, there were no strata in social relations. However, during this phase, even man came to be worshipped along with the woman who was worshipped in the hunting phase. Thus, the phase of animal husbandry of a republic represents an ideal state of tribal society. Culture and the world of spirituality of Man began taking shape in this phase. Women of this republic came to know of a few useful herbs along with preserving food towards the end of the phase of animal husbandry. Women involved themselves in the small scale agriculture of discovering and reproducing these herbs. They used soft metals such as copper and bronze for such small scale agriculture. Later, this small scale agriculture led human society to the stage of agricultural production.

During the phase of agriculture, land became the centre of production. Since copper and bronze were not useful in ploughing land, iron was discovered. The moment iron brought a revolutionary transformation in the implements of production, the social system of Man too underwent a radical change. The excess that was produced due to the use of the plough became the surplus produce among the members of the republic. The surplus started to become private property instead of being under community ownership. The surplus that was obtained due to the effort of the community started to become the private property of an individual. This consolidation of wealth converted the socialist society of the republic into a feudal society. The system of the republic gave way to the family. Since the implements used for production were male-oriented, the produce obtained came under the control of the male. The male became the chief of the republic and began forming the surroundings according to his convenience. The open society that existed during the phase of the republic vanished. Woman was the chief symbol of society. The beliefs which said that it was only through the woman that the society and the community continued its legacy no longer existed. The male seized the produce of the community's production in the republic and began controlling the

production relations in the society in which he lived. The woman became the private property of the male. Family came into being and the woman was bound by many restrictions. The woman who experienced all kinds of social, economic and cultural freedom lost all her privileges in a male-centric society. Male-centric society brought feudal values into vogue in order to protect wealth and multiply it. "This class of agricultural producers created a category called patrons".[5] The socialist society was transformed into a class based society. The working class and women who formed the majority had to expend their effort for free in the feudal society and live without expecting anything in return.

The above explains broadly the historical phases of human society. The phases of production such as food gathering, hunting, animal husbandry and agriculture are the various phases of human society. However, both these have intertwined and evolved human society in a complex manner. These four phases did not arise one after the other in sequential order. They have mixed with one another and brought human society to the present state. These four traditional production systems exist in human society even now. Therefore these four systems have not stopped at some stage during the evolution of human social institutions. These traditions means of production are in existence even now. When any tribal community is studied in the present, it is found that all these features are symbolically embedded in the community's customs, oral literature, production system and the gods it worships. A community symbolically encompasses the historical ups and downs faced by it in its customs, oral literature and spiritual cosmos.

One can observe even the nomadic tribes tribal communities having the historical phases of their society in an abstract manner in their customs, gods and oral literature. I have used the X method of D.D.Kosambi and Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya to explain the historical phases of the society of a tribe. The above writing has been influenced by the writings of these two scholars. For the time being, X method is the only academic method available to form the social history of working classes. I have tried to present this writing based on written and oral literatures of nomadic tribes tribal communities.

Nomadic tribes tribes of India are communities that come from the lowest strata of Indian society. They have lived for thousands of years without social and economic rights. They belong to the 'servant class' of this society. They depended on the economic system of the ruling classes throughout the social history of this country. This 'servant class' is mainly the creation of the class-based society of the feudal times. These servant communities were fformed during times when the ruling classes that had agricultural land as the centre of production, and made farming the main source of the economy of the society and held the entire production forces of the society decisively under their control and consolidated all social production activities under the control of the feudal centres of power. For example, in Karnataka feudalism became more dense and powerful during the rule of the Chalukyas than that of Gangas and Kadambas. The overall production activities of the society formed in Indian society during this phase under the command of feudal centres of power. One can find that division of labour, property rights, ownership of surplus and social rights were distributed based on the hierarchy existing here. Priests, warriors, landlords, agriculturalists, traders, artisans and servant communities are the creations of the society of the feudal times.

The social status and contexts of economic dependence of artisans and servant communities is not uniform here. N.R. Nandi says, "Artisans and servant communities in the feudal system had to live with unpaid toiling though they contributed the most effort in the entire production processes. Besides, they had to be slaves to Brahmins and temples".[6] There was not much difference in social status between artisans and servant communities.[7] However, during the phase when artisan communities formed in such a way that they posed a challenge to the agricultural class, especially the feudal system, there were conflicts between these two communities, quite naturally. Artisans began to struggle in order to gain respect for their labour. "All of them tried, being united, to uproot the authority of *Mathas* (religious institutions), Brahmin colonies and feudal chieftains who denied them suitable reward and independent recognition for their contribution to the production of goods".[8] This was because the skilled workers who produced goods were conducive to the production processes of agriculture and they indirectly controlled agricultural relations

through their production of goods. Artisans and the working class carried out a struggle against the feudal system that had taken a clear shape during the times of the Chalukyas. This struggle gave rise to the Movement of Basavanna and other *Sharanas* indirectly. "The Vachana Movement began at that specific period of time as the starting point of a long drawn struggle started against feudalism and the "clear crystallised" form of their aspirations".[9] In addition, it got recorded in history as the movement for the democratic aspirations of working classes in the history of the world. Although this movement involved the lower castes and created a few opportunities for these communities in a spiritual space, it could not uplift the social status of the communities. Many confusions in the ideology of this movement may have been responsible for this.

However, there were a few changes in the social status of artisans and in relation to officials after the Vachana Movement. But there was not much difference in the social status of lower castes belonging to servant class. They continued to exist as servant communities. This was because these servant communities were in no position to affect feudalism which controlled them in all their production processes. Since servant communities were involved in services belonging to the times of feudalism they had to depend economically on the feudal lords who controlled them. Besides, the servant communities did not have the opportunities of indirectly regulating and confronting the feudal system of production that the artisan communities had indirectly. Artisans controlled agriculture-related activities through their ability of providing implements for production. But the servant communities did not have this opportunity. Hence these communities continued to exist as before and they did not get any social rights. The servant class had to survive depending on the economy of the feudal system. The servant class had to live as marginalised communities in a stratified society. When feudalism emerged and features of traditional agriculture-such as division of labour and give and take-were destroyed many communities of the servant class had to transform as nomadic tribesdue to their profession.

Most of the nomadic tribesof India are those who formed due to the stratified system of this country. It cannot be said precisely that nomadic

tribescame into being at a particular period of time. The social and economic factors responsible for the formation of nomadic tribes-who are an inherent part of the complex Indian social system- are as complex as the social system of India. Nomadic tribeshave gone through all the phases that the lower caste working communities have experienced due to the stratification in India. The politico-economic dynamics of India have clearly controlled the production relations here. It is for this reason that Indian society is shattered at several levels. Hence the chief characteristic feature of Indian society is the caste system. The main intention of the caste system is to justify the overall politico-economic state of the country through social stratification. Hierarchy and caste system have come in-between the workers and those who get work done and become an unnatural social relation. It is for this reason that the stratification in India is the most complex and equally cruel system among all the unequal systems of the world.

There are many kinds of caste communities found in India's stratified system. Dis-organised rule and helpless surrender have been happening continuously in this harmful social system which has been nourished for thousands of years. The minority ruling class has bound the majority workers in a heinous manner in caste hierarchy. Though, superficially, this appears as a conspiracy to cheat the majority workers in the social and cultural spheres, there has been the politics of the upper classes wanting to gain decisive control over the produce of the workers has been operating systematically. The ruling class of this country has been destroying economic self-reliance which gives form to the lives of people and makes them proud by gaining self-confidence in social and cultural spheres. The inhuman inequality that has been nurtured in this country is solely responsible for the workers who form the majority to have regressed to the backwardness of thousands of years in the economic sphere. Although castes were divided based on professions, the ultimate fruits of production were enjoyed by the ruling class. But social inequality which formed on the basis of professions has been bothering communities constantly. Added to this, the workers who form the majority have been living without any choice in the area of production and in a helpless state, without any self-confidence.

The forces of production play a decisive role in the formation of the history of a country. The society, culture and integration of a country are achieved only through labour. However, many working communities which sacrificed themselves in wars and struggles throughout the history of this country, and those which carry the burden of the cultural edifice of this country by being its foundation are eager for a life of self-reliance even now. Though this country has history of thousands of years and a 'proud' cultural heritage, the communities which built these are living without even a single square meal a day even now. The reason for this is that the stranglehold gained by the ruling classes over the economy and the sphere of production has nourished the caste system in reality. The protection of the caste system means nothing other than the total and decisive control the ruling classes gain over the sphere of production.

Even today there are many caste communities in India that do not have social and economic rights from their birth and throughout their lives. They live bearing everything silently and get obliterated. Those who have preserved the inequality of this country and have been the masters in the social and cultural spheres for thousands of years continue to be the ruling class and have been disseminating illusions. When Man is going to space trying to find out if there is life or not on some obscure planet, the voiceless communities of India are toiling in the streets unable to have a single square meal and exist by depending upon menial traditional occupations. These communities do not have the confidence of changing occupations in the present. Ambedkar says, "The allocation of professions or allotment of work that was done due to the caste system is certainly detrimental. Occupation is never a stagnant one. Many intense and surprising changes keep taking place. When such changes take place, an individual needs the freedom to change one's occupation. If one does not have the freedom to adapt to the changed circumstance, one's livelihood becomes difficult. There is no such freedom in caste system. Instead of taking up an occupation which is new for one's caste, the fate of a Hindu is to starve, the main reason for it is the caste system".[10] Therefore, following the caste system in ultimately an organised form of economic fraud. If the social and cultural self-confidence of a community should be destroyed, one must first destroy the community's economic self-reliance. The caste

hierarchy of India has been doing this carefully from centuries. Therefore, the inequality and dimensions of exploitation of India's socio-economic spheres is the cruelest among all the kinds of inequalities and exploitations of the world.

Now, in times of globalisation, all communities of the world are moving towards bringing an identity to their lives through economic independence. Man is doing achievements that astonish even 'God' and creating surprises. Many communities are hastening towards gaining the opportunities for employment that have been created in the industrial sector. The traditional symbols of communities are vanishing. Everyday Man is putting up marvellous things on the Earth. Many dimensions of pleasure are encompassing the lives of Man. However, in India, one can see the contradiction of a society that is a thousand year old still alive. On the one hand, the corporate sector which enjoys all the pleasures of the world exists, and on the other, within a stone's throw from it there are tribal communities which live in caves and eat roots and tubers. This is the inhuman and unnatural development of the society of a country. This is a contradiction that can develop naturally in a traditional society such as India.

Caste, in India, means a production unit that is formed on the basis of division of labour. Every caste has been protecting its identity as a self-contained production unit. A caste has been making its identity more distinct at an emotional level through its custom, emblem and language. A social group tries to stand differently from another caste in many ways by being self-contained and following its own profession. Such concerns about the self-containment and distinctness are not part of the overall dynamism of the community, but also form due political compulsions of the stratifiedsystem. Many times the crisis regarding the uniqueness of a community haunts it due to the pressures of the external world. It is because of this crisis that revolutionary changes did not take place in the socio-economic condition of productive forces in India. From time to time the modes of living of the working classes kept on changing according to the the transformations undergone by the ruling class that controlled this country. But tremendous changes did not take place in the politico-economic

lives of the working classes and lower castes. Therefore, the lower castes of India have always inevitably accepted that their social condition is a remnant of tradition. Among them, it appears that the nomadic tribeslive in an unimaginable phase of the entire history of this country.

It is the economic dependence of the nomadic tribesthat prevented them from improving in social terms. Nomadic tribess, who have always been dependent economically, have lived as remnants in social terms. The reason for this is that the nomadic tribes communities which established themselves strongly in one phase of the economic history of this country, have not flowed easily and changed in the flood of growth of the society of this country. Hence, sometimes one feels that the nomadic tribes are living in a 'primitive stage' dating back to thousands of years. The formation of the social and political wholesomeness and identity of a particular community is based on the kind of production it is dependent upon. There have been no major changes in the social system of these communities since their overall economy was completely dependent upon the feudal and semi-feudal system of this country. Though they have gone through all the phases of this country's economy, these communities have been living even today as nomads and semi-nomads. Outrage and protest have been naturally expressed against feudalism in their cultural practices, oral and written literatures.

## The 'curse' of Kumaararaama to the Domba community

The major mythological texts of the Dombaru are the episodes of Kumaararaama and Ratnaji. Kumaararaama has been the subject of the highest number of poems in the literary history of Kannada. In addition, Kumaararaama is a historical person worshipped in all regions where Kannada is spoken. Perhaps there is no other king as popular as him in Karnataka. The poet Nanjunda has composed "Kumaararaama Charita", Panchala Ganga has composed "Chennaraamana Saangatya" and Mahalingaswamy has composed "Baalaraamana Saangatya" based on Kumaararaama. Folk ballads about Kumaararaama are found extensively all over Karnataka. Kumaararaama is alive in the literary context of Kannada. The main episode in poems related to Kumaararaama is the one related to Kumaararaama and Ratnaji. The backgrounds for the unfruitful

love between them have been depicted differently in 'respectable' and 'folk' poems. In respectable poems such as "Kumaararaama Charita", "Channaraamana Saangatya" and "Baalaraamana Saangatya", Ratnaji, the second wife of Kampila, who belongs to the Domba community yearns for the love of Kumaararaama who should be her son in technical terms and when she fails in her attempt, she conspires to kill him. She is depicted as a villainess in these works. However, the episode of Ratnaji is depicted in a very different manner in several folk song narratives and the version of "Kumaararaama" poem sung by Burrakatha Eramma. In these folk versions, it is Kumaararaama who first takes a liking for Ratnaji and desires to marry her. Even Kampilaraaya comes forward to marry Ratnaji to Kumaararaama. But, when Kampilaraaya sees Ratnaji, he himself gets enamoured by her beauty and desires to marry her. He gets Ratnaji, who was supposed to be married to his son, married to his royal sword by deception and makes her his second wife. Kumaararaama and Ratnaji who had to get married having like each other inevitably experience the plight of being stepmother and stepson. As a prince, Kumaararaama takes the unfulfilled love for Ratnaji in his stride quite easily. For him, his father and the kingdom formed by him are important. He 'sacrifices' his love for their sake. It is also the natural feudal nature of Kumaararaama not to have protested the fact that his own father married the girl whom he lovedthrough deception. But Ratnaji who was born into a lower caste and grew up according to her will never accepts such a fraudulent marriage. She keeps alive her love for Kumaararaama.

A king can marry anyone he likes, any number of women he wishes to. He can provide separate palaces, slaves, maids and eunuchs for the service of his queens. But for the official queen, nobody else has a right over the kingdom. The junior queens are captives in the golden cage of the king, equipments meant for the enjoyment of the king. Ratnaji hailed from the Domba community which lived in freedom. Naturally, she opposes the deception of Kampila and the indifference of Kumaararaama. She wants Kumaararaama whom she loved, come what may. Hence she makes attempts to get Kumaararaama. When that does not succeed, she endeavours to destroy the feudal system that snatched her freedom. It is again Ratnaji who fails in her attempt and gets cursed by Kumaararaama.

Kampila orders Kumaararaama to be beheaded due to the slander of Ratnaji. Baichanna, the minister, cleverly ensures that a look-alike of Kumaararaama is beheaded. "When he is beheaded, the head leaps to the sky. Then, "The severed head curses that it would make Ratnaji remove the cloth covering her chest and make her dance in every spot where blood drops from the head".[11] Even nowduring the festival 'Dombara Habba' in villages in Shimoga district, girls of the Dombaru community dance on the streets to please Kumaararaama. The Domba's believe that the cursed given by Kumaararaama is the cause for this and participate in this ritual. The Dombaru justify the practices of "Devadasi system and Dollu nuptials" prevalent in their community through this curse. They say, "It is because of the curse that Ratnaji got from Kumaararaama that they have to offer their girls to the Dollu and dance before god. They say the curse that came to Ratnaji is the one that came to their caste".[12]

Ratnaji is a villainess in the poems about Kumaararaama written by 'respectable' poets. She is punished. She desires Kumaararaama 'immorally'. But she desires Kumaararaama as a woman in folk poetry. Kumaararaama too loves her. Ratnaji, who is deceived of her love by Kampila, loves Kumaararaama quite naturally. Her longing is not measured with the parameters of 'moral and immoral' in folk poetry. Here, love and romance that are natural to humans and legitimate aspirations thrive. Ratnaji feels that Kumaararaama whom she loves belongs to her. She wishes to join him by hook or crook. This wish turns into 'sorrow' because the old Kampila married her by force and cheating. Besides, this 'sorrow' naturally transforms into vengeance in the feudal social system which considers a woman as only an object of desire. But respectable poetry comprehends Ratnaji from the perspective of feudalism. It analyses Ratnaji with clichés such as chastity and conjugal loyalty. Respectable poems do not consider Ratnaji as a woman. Ratnaji is the junior wife of a king; she is an 'object' reserved for an individual; once she is married - even if the marriage is a fraudulent one, according to the Hindu tradition of performing a marriage by uttering a thousand lies - a woman must bear everything and live with her husband. The view that a woman should fulfill all her desires and aspirations only through her husband has worked behind these 'respectable' poems. Therefore Ratnaji is a villainess and a an 'immoral' woman who

desired Kumaararaama, who was her son in technical terms. For this reason, Ratnaji deserves to be punished and cursed. It is a joke that the episode of Kumaararaama and Ratnaji which might have taken place long ago in the past obnoxiously controls the lives of Dombaru in the present. The Dombaru of Karnataka make their daughters as Devadasis and justify Dollu nuptials through the mythical curse of Kumaararaama. Even now the Devadasi system is present here and there among the Domba community. Wherever it is present, Kumaararaama exists as a representative of feudalism and a metaphor that justifies the Devadasi system in the minds of Dombaru. It is only Kumaararaama who has to answer when they will be free from his curse!

## Nomadic Tribes'Myths about Creation and Women

The cultural facets and social uniqueness of many communities are vibrant due to the women belonging to those communities. Besides, it is the women of the respective communities who carry out the crucial responsibilities of the community's labour and of running the family of many nomadic tribes. Even so, the women do not have rights in the socio-economic domains. Though the woman is equally involved like the man in the production related to the family she does not have any right in the present. It is natural to believe while studying tribal, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes that social hierarchy and gender discrimination are not prevalent to a great degree in them. One can take an example the oral literature of the distinct tribe called Halakki Vokkaligas of coastal Malnad region.

One can examine the details of the story of Maadevaraaya, the progenitor of Halakkigalu (The details of this story have been obtained from the book "The folk songs of Karavaara district" by N.R. Nayak)."[12]Maadevaraaya, who creates the Earth, first creates Basavesha and sends him to know the "lustre" of the Earth. Already an Earth has been created. Basaveshwara sees that the Earth is placed on a pipal leaf and penance being performed by a woman sitting on the tip of a needle. When Basavesha plays an instrument she melts into water". Basaveshwara narrates this story to Maadevaraaya. Maadevaraaya says, "We do not need the Earth created by a woman. Let us get an Earth from our own truth".

Later, he forms the Earth, sky and living beings from a pigeon's egg. He created Kolata for the entertainment of the living beings. The gods do not know how to play Kolata. Then Maadevaraaya created Halakki Vokkaligaru from milk's cream and gave them a drum and sticks.

In another version of this story, among the Earth, sea and sky that were created, only the Earth was as soft of the back of a child's head. Maadevaraaya sends Basavesha to find out why the Earth is so soft. Basavesha informs Maadevaraaya that, "the Earth is not becoming hard because *holati*, a woman belonging to a lower caste, is doing penance". Then Maadevaraaya chops the woman into pieces and creates a caste from those pieces".[13]

**The Story of the Creation of the Woman**

``Maadevaraaya creates a lake to perform his penance and rituals. Brahma, too, comes to the lake. He creates a female doll. Vishnu, who comes to the lake for his penance , gives life to the doll. Later, Maadevaraaya gives clothes to the woman who stands naked and is very shy. Then, a fight breaks out among the three gods about marrying the woman. Baleendra, who was the ruler of the world, organises an adjudication. Baleendra gives the verdict that Brahma who created her is her father, Vishnu who gave her life is her mother and Shiva who gave her clothes is her husband. Maadevaraaya weds the woman as per the judgement issued by Baleendra. They produce the people of the world".[14]

There is a need to carefully examine the three myths of creation mentioned above. The oppression of the woman and the cruelty of men have been expressed in them at the literal level. Already the Earth is created, and a woman is performing penance on it sitting on the tip of a needle. But Maadevaraaya who wants to create the Earth says that he does not need the Earth "created by a woman" and so creates another Earth. The Earth he creates does not become hard. When it is found that it is as soft as the head of a child, and the reason for it is sought, it is said that a *Holati* is performing penance sitting on the tip of a needle. Maadevaraaya chops the lower caste woman and creates castes from the pieces of her body. In another version, the woman who is created by Brahma and given life by

Vishnu has no freedom of choice. Those who create the woman and those who determine who should marry her are the three gods, all of them being men. Thus, the woman who marries Maadevaraaya without a murmur becomes responsible for creation along with him.

The dissolution of the woman and the man's disregard for her existence are strikingly visible in these myths of creation. The narrative of Maadevaraaya, the progenitor of the Halakkigalu, that they sing during the harvest festival clearly justifies the subjugation of women. Mahadevaraaya, the progenitor of Hallakkigalu, himself considers that women to be inferior and rejects the Earth created by her. That apart, he kills a woman and creates castes out of her. Thus, the feudal quality of a man - who is himself the originator of a community - who displays cruelty by oppressing a woman is strongly depicted in the oral literature of this tribe.

**Oral Narratives are a World of Contradictions**

There are hordes of stories of women who question men and patriarchy, and those who rebel against the norms of society which oppress women in many narrative poems composed by women of tribal, nomadic tribes and semi-nomadic tribes communities. Women who feature in such narrative songs appear as rebels. One can find that views in favour of freedom of choice which women need, social rights through which they can express their opinions and a family system free of inequality are expressed in these narratives. Such narratives favouring the aspirations of women are found to be dormant in most of the oral discourses of all the working classes of this country.

Such rebellious voices supporting women are found dispersed in customs, art and oral literatures of lower caste and tribal communities. However, such protests remain restricted to some period of time and individuals. And, these scattered resistances end at the level of symbolism without taking the shape of an uprising and without causing extensive impact. Also, these protests do not transform into struggles that eliminate feudalism which exploit women. Hi.Chi. Boralingaiah opines that: "The gentle friction between man and woman has been expressed in the inner

space of the stories and poems of Halakki community. It is a notable feature that in all such instances the woman gains victory".[15] There are evidences endorsing these opinions in the narratives. The male alone is not the cause for the oppression of women in these narratives. Women are also the exploiters in the form of the mother-in-law and the elder sister in the oppression of women. In the story of the daughter of the snake of the Halakkigalu, when she jumps into the sacrificial fire-pit and turns into ash, her husband dives into the same fire-pit and dies. These narratives have not portrayed only the male as the symbol of oppression of women. Instead, the man is also compassionate. These narratives confront feudalism which nourishes the traditional system named family. When Nagarakanye-who features in the story "Nagarakanye" of the Halakkiyaru- goes to her father's house leaving her husband's house, her father instills courage in her saying that he would marry her to another man. But Nagarakanye wants freedom from marriage, its institutionalised form called family, the male who arrogates upon himself the ownership of the family as a husband and the feudal system which gives prominence to the male. Finally she jumps to the fire and dies. Her jumping into fire may appear superficially as her helplessness and escapism. But her entry into fire can be viewed as the rebellion of a suffering woman who rejects the feudal system that subjugates women and one who desires a society free from inequality. The man is only an instrument of a system. It is the feudal society that holds the instrument, the one which keeps alive disparity and gender discrimination.

The protests of women found in all these narratives eventually get dissolved in a male-dominated social order. The woman who boldly faces the brisk blow of the exploitation encountered in a moment runs fast to offer herself to the noose of another form of exploitation. Uttaradevi is humiliated in her husband's house. She faces insult due to the accusation that she might have a relationship with another man, her brother-in-law. She protests against the harassment inflicted by her mother-in-law and leaves the house. Again, she goes to a patriarchal system. Gowri shrinks due to the inhuman examination arising from selfishness of the male that she is subjected to by Shiva. The husband and his wrath are significant for her. This is because she is subordinate. Shiva's intention of examining her

is formed from her feudal subjugation to the idea of the superiority of the male. It is the arrogance of the patriarchal society that wants to test the wife who is innocent and to make her commit a mistake.

As mentioned before, the rebellions by women found in these narratives are not intended to achieve the comprehensive freedom of women. They are momentary protests that emerge in moment and vanish. These narratives are the products of the times when feudalism was at its peak. Hence, the rebellions of women found in these narratives do not take the form of a movement. They dissipate like separate brooks. They have not taken the form of rivers with gigantic strength that have the power to create a flood.

As discussed earlier, the manner in which the Halakkigalu think of women is no different from the way in which so-called 'mainstream' societies do. This is because the sources we rely upon to write this piece of writing compel us to arrive at this conclusion. The sources that we have for studying the historical phases of the gender relations of communities such as Halakkigalu are the oral literature and cultural practices of these communities. The oral literature and the cultural practices of these communities are those that were formed during the feudal rule of the medieval period. These communities constructed such narratives during the period when feudal society was severely involved in controlling the production relations of society. Even the epic poems "Manteswamy", "Malemahadeshwara" and "Junjappa" that are much discussed in the present are creations of the medieval feudal period. Inequality in gender relations is found even in these epic poems. Tribal communities such as the Halakkigalu have never stayed away from the so-called 'mainstream' society. They have lived subjected to the rule of kingdoms, empires and feudal chieftains. These communities have been influenced by all kinds of extreme politico-economic and religious influences that came from time to time. Therefore, the culture and the social systems that are purely tribal and of their own have not continued to exist. It was impossible for them to survive in that manner. Hence Halakkigalu formed their production relations like other communities in the feudal system.

The family system, the relations among husband, wife and children and the overall production relations of the hamlet have formed in the same manner as the 'mainstream' society. Therefore the Halakki community too has formed itself in the vortex of this country's caste hierarchy. Hence male dominance and patriarchy which are prescribed by feudal society are naturally found in this community. Here, 'woman' is subordinate, the one to be protected as in other communities. She has to be compulsorily subjected to the norms of the society. She is eligible only for the duties of the society and the family; if the woman has any rights they will be fulfilled within the condition-bound framework of the family and the community. Therefore, there are many examples of Halakki women accepting patriarchy as religious injunction or natural order.

In most of the studies conducted on women, discussions about the uniqueness of the woman and the expression of womanhood have taken place in two ways. One, the male controls the woman, restricts her according to the patriarchal norms formed by him, and has subjugated her by implementing his commands.This centre of power keeps the woman in a vortex of exploitation. Two, subordination and dominance have come to women and men based on the structure of the body of man and woman. That is, the woman undergoes gender discrimination due to the difference in gender and the anxieties during childbirth. One must examine the gender related stances of tribal communities such as the Halakkigalu even as one agrees with the positions of modern feminist scholars.

Woman-man relations among tribals appear on the surface to be at an unequal plane as in so-called 'mainstream' societies, but are not so simple. Therefore, the idea of womanhood is more complex and complicated among tribals. There is the possibility of the traditional social relations of these communities working behind this. Here, the man cannot completely reject the woman and become complete in social and bodily terms. Even the woman needs the man for these very reasons. Even as the woman is aware that she is exploited due to biological reasons, yet her rebellious spirit is expressed. 'I' can live without 'him' since there is the ego that 'he' (the male) 'protects' in the society created by 'him'. He has the arrogance that he is 'complete' in his body. The Halakki woman displays the ability

to reject patriarchy and reestablish her identity. In the story of Uttaradevi, she is aware of the fact that even when it is her mother-in-law who suspects her, the seeds of the suspicion of the mother-in-law are in patriarchy. In the story of Simpiga, Gowri comes forward to mingle with Simpiga instead of her husband. She has the fear of the anger of her husband behind her decision. Marakkadevi rejects the man-made worldly wealth that her elder brother may create in the future and integrates with the man whom she loves. Yashawantha's wife firmly rejects the sexual relationship with a man whom she does not like even in her dream. Even when she rejects him, ultimately, she gets killed for the uniqueness of her identity. Later, her younger sister says that she cannot live with the man who killed her elder sister and rejects her husband; without returning to her parental home, she leaps to the funeral pyre.

The Halakkigalu consider the woman as a living being, one with a distinct identity. They are aware that the identity is responsible for the perpetuation of the world. The woman is constitutes a separate world for Maadevaraaya, the progenitor of the Halakkigalu, and he believes that it has a unique identity and power and for that very reason tries to create a different world. Before Maadevaraaya creates the Earth, a woman does so and performs penance sitting on the tip of a needle. The Halakkigalu, in their worldview, display an awareness of the tremendous ability of the woman and the incomparable power that she creates. Also, Maadevaraaya slaughters the woman who perfoms penance and creates various communities on the Earth. Finally Maadevaraaya marries the woman who was created by Brahma and formed by infusing life into her by Vishnu, and begets progeny on the Earth. Here, the male is just the creator. The awareness that the woman has an independent, skillful and powerful existence even before the man creates, is present in the tradition of thought of the Halakkigalu. Here, the man is an instrument. But the woman is the producer. She has the skill and the ability to produce. It is the woman who brings forth water in a well that is dry. The Halakkigalu have the vision that even when the woman, ultimately, succumbs to the patriarchal feudal system, her existence and the ending of her existence contain the biological truth of production. Simone de beauvoir explains the same as follows: "Woman is not born, but she is formed.

Mostly the history of the working class is hidden in their oral literature. The history constructed by the classical literature of this country is half true. Therefore, we have to consider the oral literature of each community as reference for their history. The scholars too should consider the oral literature as authentic references. The history of exploited communities in India is hidden in their mythologies and narratives. It is imperative to look into the mythologies of the neglected and nomadic communities while writing their history.

This study tries to explain three significant points. First is to explain the forms of narratives among the neglected and nomadic communities. Secondly, the worldly view of these communities at global and local levels through their narratives, the shaping of these communities in the global social history and thirdly, to explain the socio economic situation of the present of these communities.

There is no differences between the denotified and nomadic communities. The British declared only few communities as criminal tribes. These communities came out from the label of criminal thus became denotified tribal groups. Despite indentifying as criminal tribes they were not respected for their traditional knowledge, art and hardship since the heads of the society were preoccupied with modernisation. That is why the nomads confined their oral poetry, performing art and dance to begging and became orphans.

Not just changes in the occupation or with varying global changes have resulted in atom communities physically became nomads. The nomadic communities are nothing but the fossils of the primal communities that are being often discussed. In many places there seems to be rich among these communities only shows the structural changes but not the changes in perception. Though there is diplomacy but does not affect to their skills and feelings. The pottery that came handy in the harden days for Bylapathar and Ghisadi communities who sweat out has become an industry but culturally and morally has retained the nomadic characteristic.

The significant field of this study is the cultural life of communities and the forms and styles used for its expression. The nomadic girl or the

elderly person singing a bit would reflect their history. Each community constructing the myths of place or the perception of universe depicts the biographical commune consciousness.

The reader comprehends of a community that has been written by a sensible literate about the insults, tears, enjoyment, celebration and curiosity as a complete picture of that community. Although it is partially true and without the knowledge of literacy there are innumerable communities whose cultural identity has to be searched in their oral tradition. In this direction, as a representative from Karnataka and of South India, a few communities have been taken for a comprehensive understanding of their narratives that does not stop to it but provides ample insights.

1. The psychological model of Sigmund Frayed
2. The model of Marxists way of studies
3. The research methodology of Levistrauss
4. The model of Modern thinkers and Lohiya

Beyond these in the long history of human beings the collected memories, ideals, enlightenment how these are documented in the unconscious state could be seen in the autobiographies of the nomads. Some of the narratives have been under taken for studies here in this regard.

"One day it has intertwined
The infinity of past and future
Who knows the enlightened?
Just for talking to a day
The scholars and renowned and other elders
Have passed through without knowing the time Guheshwara"[16]

The creativity is an embodiment of both the tradition and consciousness. This world is aware of the past heritage and the infinity of the future. For any poet it is essential to have historical consciousness not only of the past but also the present.

The historical consciousness compels a writer to imbibe the contemporary of his or her time (T.S. Eliot, Tradition and individual talent,

p - 390). The hierarchical system in India, the priestly class in particular has acted like spokes person of the knowledge thus lead to intellectual slavery.

The constant exploitation of the lower communities inculcated a sense of inferiority and also lost the power of rebellion. The nomads did not have any strength to bounce back on the exploiter became self hatred to themselves. If the lower communities had rebelled the history of India would have been different, but it did not happen.

"While the communities are struggling to get even a meal for a day, the cultural existenance becomes sarcastic".

"The cultural heroes or the owners of the metaphysical asset of the lower communities win all the physical lacunae only in miracles and become the emperor of the spiritual world".[17]

In the cultural politics of hierarchy, the rulers have systematically rejected the knowledge and consciousness of the lower communities. Therefore, the Scheduled Caste and women are denied the literacy. These communities slept without any protest. The enlightened of the lower communities like Manteswamy, Mylaralinga and Nareyanappa gave cultural awakening on the basis of spirituality that would express in self assertion to these lower communities. Still the priestly class of this Country consistently tried to nullify.

The prophet of humanism of the world Buddhism was tried to make it disappear from the country was evident when thousands of Buddha saints were killed at Nagarjuna Konda by conventional people like Shankaracharya has been explained in the book 'Shankaracharya and Goondaism'. But, there are several historical incidents that did protest this act. 'Siri' in her oral poetry curse that 'let the soil of sathyanapura be desert, let the palace be burnt into ashes has historical importance.

The west mind may not comprehend the dilemma of Manteswamy or the cultural complexities of Junjappa. The arguments are not that we should completely reject the western research methodology. The rationale struggles having multi cultural dimension may look absurd when it is put

in vast frame of the world. Roland, Bo volt, Manteswamy, Madeshwara have not done wars, but their struggle were based on the logic. They get into conversation encompassing the entire India being an achiever of small community in a small corner. Therefore, we need in the present a methodology that would highlight the protest of these communities that are built on the cultural logic in the narratives. The tribals are facing the impact of colonialism on Africa. It is an insult to imperialist that the tribals are coming back to their language and writing in the same language. The people who are suppressed are not necessarily the victims. One of their parts always tries to compromise. The other part rejects or opposes or completely uproots the suppression. Many a time this uprooting act in the name of adjustment and in the mask of slavery antagonizes the present.

It can be seen that in one particular geographical area the multi nationalities and struggles living together. The imperialist getting beaten either on religious or community levels, but it would be a win of the Nationality. Whatever may be the size, weight of these beatings, let the situation and time be anything, but overall these beatings construct the heritage of Nationality.

This is explained in the book "colonial consciousness and awareness" by Theango Gogi. As explained in "narratives Myasabeda" that the Lambani community when its relatives come to Thanda are embraced and remember the past in weeping at Harapanahalli.

Even now it could be seen that how the Dalit nomadic communities recollect the memories when there is a death of an elder and performing the death related rituals. Even now once a year food is offered to the dead near their burial place. The nomadic groups strengthen their memories through these rituals and this transforms from generation to generation.

The literacy denied communities still depend on their memories in the time of repetition of documented elements from obtaining Macaulay model of education.

"The dreams that may seem as negligible have not been researched its cultural history. To comprehend the memories of the world a creative folk artist constructs the mega narrative of his community with utmost

dedication. There would be rational elements in the beyond time mega narrative. One cannot create magnanimous if there is strong cultural memories."[18] A sensible writer though out the life goes on improving the past consciousness and expands its length and breadth as part of personality development.

These can be seen in the biographies of the nomads based the response of the oral tradition. Technically it only further highlights the perception of the community, although the autobiographies from the talented from the community begins the experience in the first person gradually transforms into the experiences of the entire community and also reflects the cultural situation to write these biographies in the writing tradition, some of those texts have been analysed here.

## 6.3. Farce related to Feudal system

### Disabled birth and Feudal system

In the origin epics of all the nomadic communities the first person is always boycotted, rejected and does not need from the mainstream society. The child born with disability is forbidden from the family. They are blessed by Shiva and Parvathi to live from begging and banned the property sharing between the elder and younger wives of Reddy. Chinnasaani mother is given only the materials that demands to exhibit the skills. The younger wife is not a heir to get the property. In many other stories the first person of Dombaru is born from prostitution or from the inter caste marriage. Al-biruni too documents this in his travelogue. The children of Dombaru have been considered as the children of prostitution. They were included under Scheduled Caste because they are born from a Brahmin mother and a scheduled caste father (Al - biruni, India, p - 46, 1983). The story of Kumararama and Ratnaji is very popular. But she has been cursed to sleep with others because she liked Kumararama.The important point here to note is that the first person of Domba community is banned and born from unethical marriage. Because of this he does not have position and dignity in the Society, added to this he is disabled. Even though the organs start developing but he has been blessed to beg and eat by the god and goddess. Ratnaji is cursed who marries Kampila by his cheating and

likes Kumararama as a natural feeling. Her generation is Dombaru. Why communities construct this kind heart breaking story for its existence? Why this community perpetuates its origin story which is full of boycott, ban, prostitution. Is there any relation between these stories and present life of Dombaru?

The Sudugaadu Siddaru is cursed to lose their cultivable land and devote themselves to Shiva. They lost their economic source because of the curse by Parvathi. Kavalethinavaru identifies them as came down to earth to kill the giant demon by cow and take the cow from place to place for the welfare of the society. Hakki Pikki who was duped by their Marwari brothers came to south and till this day are nomads.

The first person of Helava too had born disabled. The single leg Bhrungeshwara comes down to earth from Kailas and the first person mostly is cursed. Most of the mythologies narrate that the first person was by birth disabled and cursed.

The question may raise that how to believe that these mythologies are the authentic documents. The history of the exploited class always lies in their self hatredness and helplessness.

The working classes are so helpless that they construct their history in self hatred as their first person was a disabled and cursed. The first person of the nomad was abused and creating him with disability is by deities. It means those who are in power and orders and the employers. Therefore, the origin epics are not evil creations; instead it is a hidden volcano of the self hatredness of the lower castes and it is imminent to consider the origin epics as the biographies of each community. Though these origin epics they create a new dimension to history to their economic activities since the nomads have lost their economic resources by the ruling class. Losing the assured economic source in turn symbolically becomes disabled and become dependent. He lives in the self hatredness without having the strength to protest. The land that affirms ardently the Karma philosophy thus cursed in old birth lives like an orphan with self sympathy.

We all know that the nomad belongs to lower caster in the hierarchical system of India. But there is distinction in the socially and economically

among the lower castes and nomads who are settled and have definite economic sources. To understand the origin of these communities we get only their origin epics. The historical situations that molded each community would be documented in these epics. We face the lacunae of authentic evidences while writing origin and the social history of nomadic groups. The renowned research scholar Dr. Chidanandamurthy accepts that there is a dearth of classical reference while writing the history of the lower castes and nomadic groups. If we go by the ancient inscriptions and literary works to understand the history of these communities we face several problems. The mythologies that are constructed by the nomads itself provoke us to construct alternate history.

The nomads lose their economical sources for somebody's curse in the origin epic or born as disabled they experience dependency. The nomads have documented their nomadic lives in their origin epic that for somebody's whims and fancy.

Therefore, cursed for some reason, the socio economical activities of the communities decisively controlled even in the physical world. We feel the origin epics as romantic. But even in this romantic world, the origin of the nomads happens either with curse or disability. The life has been shattered in this romantic world. We may question about the relationship of age old epics and their present life. There is a direct relationship between the present life and the way they have constructed the epics about their birth. Therefore, while writing the social history of the nomads the origin epics play a pivotal role.

## The History of nomadic communities Society

It has been perceived in Indian Society that a caste as the definite production unit. To evolve a definite culture, language and life style, it is essential for a society to have economic integration. The economy is the nucleus of a society. Most of the social scientists of the world approve this. The sociologist Bhagavath Sharan Upadhyaya who studied the metamorphosis of history of Indian Society states that "there is no doubt that the economic reasons established the social systems in the past" (Dr. Chidanandamurthy, the perception of untouchablity in middle age

Kannada literature, p - 4, 1985). Therefore, it is inevitable for the development of life styles of a community. We can evaluate the historical development of Indian society for clarification.

The farcical division of society in India from racism has not satisfied even in the present. Depending on the production variation it was labeled as highest and least leading to economic structures. The creamy layer got the highest positions. But the least economic activities were dumped on the majority of working class. Ambedkar puts it the following way "being under the social division of labour, many groups were discriminated, some of them become big; rest of it became smaller groups, Vyshya and 'Shudra' classes were the nucleus and are reference for the present innumerable castes" (Bhagavath Sharana Upadhya, Historical analysis of Indian Society, p - 153). Therefore, the working classes are the nucleus of the society and have been divided as castes for the desire of social power of ruling class. Thus, Castes were ceremoniously given the physical entity on the bases of spirituality. It became complete with social justice and Shastra's. A caste making its existence as important loved the structures of heritage of the Country. This created a thin fencing between the castes. The tragedy is that a caste internally allowed itself to be part of the hierarchy. This was manifested in claiming as high and low. Overall the social structure of India thus took an unnatural shape. Later this structure expanded from time to time and took a legal existence.

The overall economic changes that took place in the Country the society too underwent several metamorphoses. As the economy became complex, likewise the social structures too became complex. The social laws of this Country went on cruel to working class and women. These economic changes humiliated the working class. The sociologists classify the historical development of India in various ways - as the development of religion - the period of Veda, the time of Buddha, Jainism and Vyshnava period and so on, in each period based on the control of the religion, many follow to write the social history. Others try to base the social history on the rulers like Gupta period, Mourya period and Shathavahana period. But the Marxists researchers study based on the production relation. The production methods of a particular period decide the production relations

of that period and they tried to grasp with this perception. Therefore, the different stages of the history of Indian society cannot be classified broadly or definitely.

As it has already been said that the working class undergoing various metamorphoses became more and more complex thus further divided into castes. Many of the castes played an important role in production and many other castes became the supportive groups. To sustain the major production area - agriculture, the carpenter, potter, goldsmith and blacksmith classes with skills came into existence. Likewise, the entertaining class and unproductive feudal depended castes also came into being. Significantly, the unproductive, entertaining castes were had to depend on feudal lords. Therefore, the changes that occurred have influenced these communities and as the modernisation took over the feudalism, the depended communities shattered and naturally lost the very existence despite playing an important production relation role in the society. But their services have become free of cost for the rulers. When the labour was wasting freely hence they are unproductive. In the broader sense, these unproductive communities became service communities or class.

During the middle age the Brahmin, temples and the feudal lords exploited heinously the skilled and service communities. The skilled and other lower castes were supposed to render their service on free of cost that was considered as part of social justice, hence these two classes were exploited mercilessly (Ramendranath Nandi, State formation agrarian Growth and Social Change in Feudal South India, A.D. 600- 200, p-187, 2000). During the same period as part of the aspirations of the skilled and lower castes, the Vachana movement was started. But this movement ended up tragically because of the political conspiracies and myopic visions.

But in the period of feudalism, the services of the skilled and lower castes were legalized. Apart from the free service to temples and Brahmin they depended on the feudal lords. A price was fixed for their service and productions or the landlords gave their lands on lease to these communities. But these communities were supposed to render service to the land lords. Thus they were forced in to a kind of bondage. These communities were apprehended whenever the land lords changed their attitude and economic

moves. Because of this economical reason nomads were thus formed in India. Dombara society might have been taken shape during this period. These communities were born to provide service to rulers and land lords; communities like Helava naturally imbibed the qualities of feudalism. Therefore, the lower communities in India inevitably adopt the values of feudalism despite having their own concepts of equality and democracy in their memories. We can see this among Dombaru even to this day.

Dombaru too have surpassed several socio-economic levels. Hypothetically it can be said that the Dombaru must have come into existence during establishment of class society in the Country. Analysing their origin epic, the origin of family and also the feudal values can be traced back. It becomes clear that Dombaru were there as dependents on land lords in their origin epics.

The do's and don'ts of the division of labor lead to hierarchical system in the Country. The day to day life of social groups in different stages decided who should do what work and the weak groups had to be confined either the work whatsoever got or imposed to do. The win means the control over the economic resources. The productions that creates surplus would be controlled by the dominant groups or the winning groups. The main thrust of the groups who had the control over the society always justified in the name tradition the working styles of the producing working class. Precisely for this reason, India keeps on justifying the conventional production system despite rapid technological advancement of the society. This did not allow many revolutions to happen in the production sector. The changes that took place from time to time did not bring much excitement among the working class in India. Al though it helped in overcoming the social humiliations but did not impact much on their economical front.

Due to this the hierarchical system of India in the history of human society has unique position. Despite the severe changes in the global production relations, still the castes have retained the conventional economic dependency in India. Nomads are no exception to this. Apart from the farmers, only nomads retained their conventional economic sources since there was no great economic revolution in the conventional

Indian society. Therefore it could perpetuate the heinous facets of social inequality. That is why the nomads have become an integral part of this hierarchical system. The nomads who have multiple degrees and roam around the globe for their sustenance does not come under this study, rather those who struggle for day to day life and even in this 21st century are living under social inevitabilities are considered as nomads. They have been part of the unequal social system, the nomads who are in the present, how was their life in the olden India? It may not be possible to have clear understanding about the life of nomads during the rule of the kings about two thousand years back what life these nomads could have been living? But they have been referred in our olden literature. With this we can understand the economic status of that particular period of these communities. Let us see the Dombaru have been projected who are part of the social history of Karnataka. The excerpts we get on Dombaru is in Pampa's 'Vikramarjuna vijaya'. 'Sukumara charithe' of Shanthinatha makes a reference as 'in the town of kashambipura, in the house of Domba, there was a person disguised as women'. Andaiah in his Kabbigarakavya says that 'the string is the floor for a Domba child'. Kalhana in his rajatarangini in twelfth century states that along with chandala, cobbler, Domba too were untouchables and Madivala Machaiah say that 'Domba is in the outside of the town'.

'For the false devotion put a Summersault of Domba' states purandara in his song. Poet Nanjunda's Kumararama sonnet of 16th century, Panchalaranga's 'chennarama' sonnet of 17th century, Mahalingaswamy's 'balarama' sonnet of 19th century and also in Devachandra's rajavali also studies under taken during the colonial Karnataka mentions that Dombaru depending on their skills.

Al-biruni in his book 'India' while travelling across the Country in the eleventh century has given descriptions of the society. He states that "The bottom most community is 'anthyaja' than Shudra. These anthyaja's were born to serve their upper castes; they are dhobi, cobbler, magician, basket weavers, sailor, fisherman, hunter and weaver.... But without belonging to these there are 'hadi', Domba, chandala, and 'badhathou' communities. These four groups work to clean up the village which nobody

wants do and they have involved in most evil services. These are the bottom most communities". More or less Dr. D.D. Kosambi too express the same that "Dombaru, Vaddaru, Yerugaru, Yanadi and boyi are the most backward tribal communities.

Hemachandra in the middle age(11-12th century) said that 'Khikhiri' and 'Jhanjhari' are not Sanskrit words rather they are native that were used by chandala and Domba while entering the village they used to hold a stick making noise and these are names of those sticks. It used to be called as 'Kankarigolu', 'sambaligolu' in Karnataka. It was the duty of the lower caste to inform the upper caste about their entry either by shouting or making sound from the sticks. Fahiyan too mentions about this practice. Hyuense thung states that Slaughter, fishermen, Domba, 'jalagara' and the hangman houses on the out skirts and it is marked for identification. He also mentions that when he was travelling he was supposed to walk only on to the left side of the road. The above mentioned references establish that the Domba were employed for utmost heinous jobs along with performing their skills. H. V.Nanjundaiah who did study on the clans of Mysore region state as follows;

"Domba is lowest community in the society. The nomadic Domba eat with vaddaru and Beda. But the settled Domba has clear cut line to separate themselves from others. Nobody eats the food cooked by them except 'Holeyas' and Madiga. They all sorts of meat including crow but does not eat the meat of cow, monkey and snake. The settled Domba have given up eating meat of owl and rat".

Domba have been considered as untouchables. They can enter up to veranda of the upper caste houses. They are drunkards including women and children. Their habitation is full of noise soon after sun set. They fetch water from the well in the village; the dhobi washes their clothes, barber does not make fussy to cut their hair but for nomadic Domba there is need to give their clothes for washing. They can enter the temples but cannot take part in any of the rituals or ceremonies. The status of Koracha in Hindu society is the same status of Domba.

Nanjundaiah documents that by the end of 19th century Domba were

started the settlements. He identifies the sharp difference between the nomads and the settlers. But it is clear both the groups are lowest communities in the hierarchical system of the past. Stephen Fokes states that 'As Domba became close to Hindu society, the Domba were pushed to untouchability and heinous position. They remain the same in the present. The work cannot be done by a sweeper was inevitably to be done by the Domba. Although they are not the bottom most community but the hierarchy brought them close to bottom most community. Their food habit too contributed for their social standing. They eat the rotten meat of cow, pig, horse and rat which the conventional Hindu feels nauseating and also we can see many groups still performing on the roads in Karnataka.

The above mentioned all the references highlights the social status of Domba. The performing Domba, musician Domba and Domba is self explanatory of their skills and services. But they are untouchables in the hierarchical system. The already mentioned references do not only repeat the past history but till this day Domba are untouchables in many parts of Karnataka. We have believed that the Holeyas, Madiga and Dakkaliga castes are untouchables. But apart from these untouchable communities still there are other lower caste communities that are living in isolation and as untouchables; one among such community is Domba. There is no property for those communities who render their labour in the name of service to the rulers in the economic system of India. The labour rendered like this are either the lower castes or the artisans. The artisans upgraded their social status with their skills in agriculture. But for the lower castes there were no opportunities. It is extremely remote that the lower castes rebelled against their rulers with their skills and labour in the Indian history. It is not irrelevant to say that there were no such protests till the neo modern times. It is a crime to have property like land and cattle by these communities. Let alone buying the property by an untouchable but the untouchable himself is a property for the rulers. Ambedkar states that 'Hindu has untouchables as their property, to enhance the interest the untouchables are the assets of Hindu, but they just dumped the ownership when it comes to have other responsibilities. The untouchables cannot ask for any benefits in the not liberated social system but have to be borne all the calamities in the free social system". Untouchability is the end state of

slavery and comparatively much cruel (ibid, p - 26). In the Indian context the ruling class perceives that slave and servant are unproductive and also untouchable. Ambedkar clarifies the similarities and contradictions between untouchable and slave while analysing the slaves of Roman Empire. There was a need of dancers, singers, musicians, gamblers, artists to fulfill the need of one section in the society and slavery is an embodiment of all.

The entertainers of Roman Empire were slaves, but had right over the economical sources. During the rule of August the slaves were given land for lease. Contrarily, the communities who are slaves, entertainers and servants are also untouchables and they do not have any right over the economical sources. They do not have any right despite putting labour in production and to the rulers. They do not have the right over their produces. As far I know there is only one way for the untouchables to make a living is the right to beg with the Hindu farmers in the villages. There is administration mechanism in each village, and the untouchables have the fortune of working as lowest servants. In the olden days a piece of land was given for their service and this piece is immovable and most of the time the untouchable consider not to cultivate since the land is broken into smaller pieces along with this the only right they have is to beg for food. Perhaps it is a tragedy that the situation of servant communities is still in the same way.

It was inevitable for the servant classes to fulfill the needs of rulers of feudal period. The singers, musicians, dancers, entertainers and those were in bondage did not remain as servants but each of them turned into a caste. They did not have ownership on anything. The servant class was considered as the assets of the ruling class. The social justice of the Country compulsorily prohibited the servant class to have property. They had no freedom on themselves and believed that if a child is born to the ruler, they would sacrifice to village deity, if the ruler is deceased, they would sacrifice for his well being, if the ruler dies in the war they too would give up their life to safeguard the ruler. The systems like 'melavali', 'lenkavali', 'joladapali', guruda have taken the right of living of servant communities. It was the duty of the servant to give his life to the ruler in 'joladapali' system. They had no right over themselves or on their wife and children.

The girl child of the servant community has to leave her to deity; this girl can be used by the powerful person of the society. The rulers can use their children for human sacrifice during the harvest. Felix Fidel explains that the 'Kond' people of Madhya Pradesh use Domba children for sacrifice every year. "The Kond people used to bring 'Dom' children for sacrifice to 'meraiah'. They were so poor that they were selling children and also the Domba were untouchables. Felix Fidel says that for kond people the dom, pano, paide are untouchables. The girl children of the servant class are the Devadasis of the present. The communities that were serving the lords, the girl of that servant community were a useable commodity for the feudal kings. Ambedkar has made list of the duties enforced on the untouchables and servant class in Hindu religion, on the occasion of celebration the girl of servant and untouchable class has to be given to village community for their enjoyment is one such duty. These kind of customs still prevalent among the Domba community even to this day.

The first female artist of the Kannada theatre 'Kaujalagi Ningamma' belongs to Domba community. She developed 'krishna parijatha' as one of the powerful theatre presentation. There are several books published on the life of Ningamma. Several incidents have provoked her to become artist, her mother's helplessness and poverty is important among them. Her mother wanted Ningamma to be educated because of her social humiliations. 'The mother used to go for water pouring ceremony every year and also to betageri'. 'Okuli' means a kind of service for the welfare of the village. This practice is very much prevalent in Northern Karnataka. This celebration is done in the name of god - Maruthi, wherein, the youngsters of the village fill the pots with water of the pond that is in front of the temple and hit it to girls of the lower caste. Ningamma's mother sent her to learn music to another place to avoid social humiliation that she was facing. To establish a theatre group, to become a famous artist Ningamma would have been provoked by the humiliations of her mother and her community. Similar kind of practice is 'dollu prastha'.**During** the festival of Domba, dollu prastha is celebrated in many parts of Shimoga district. Here the Domba girls are married to dollu (a musical instrument), these girls are temporarily sold to the chieftain of the village or to the land lord. Anybody can have these girls for a year by

giving them the grains worth about Rs. 300 -400. The Domba says that the curse of Kumararama is the reason for this practice to perpetuate. The Domba girls have to dance in the streets and Kumararama who is in heaven or elsewhere and the land lords enjoy looking at the dance. The curse of Kumararama is worrying the Domba but it has become a boon for the land lords. The curse is controlling Domba to be a servant all the time. The Domba girls are trying to come out of the curse undergoing the torture of 'Okuli'. They may not come out of the curse since the generation of Kumararama is continuing and renewing in disguise forms. Domba have to live with untouchability, poverty and without freedom. The legislations of Hindu society go on imposing these curses through people like Kumararama. These rituals have been ruling with traditional legitimacy on lower castes. We praise the Indian culture as unique, cradle of world's civilisation, the country that saw golden period and so on that too the Sangha parivar colorfully explains that India is beautiful, for them India is plain without any undulations and the flowers blossomed everywhere. They make everyone to believe this as the reality. They refer to excerpts from Sanskrit or some unknown language, to that extent India is beautiful to them. There won't be people who built this nation in their picture or their sufferings, humiliation, tears and sweats. These people are there only to build. They have to tolerate all the humiliations, violence for building mansions with their blood. They won't be in the list of developmental programmes of this Country. These do not have place in planned documentaries of tourism department. But still they are the citizens of India and are the fossils of the tradition that the Country is protecting.

P.K. Mishra who has done extensive study on nomads of India states that "nomads are the traditional representatives of India". They have been considered as the protectors of traditional fossils of Hindu society. But what tradition and which India that these nomads are protecting? Why only nomads have to protect? These questions do not arise in the discussions.

### History of Domba and their economy

It has been seen that Domba have retained and depended on their traditional economic source of 'Dombarata'. They were also encouraged

and given donations by some of the kings, it has been said that the servant community like Domba have depended on the feudal system as their economic source, since their control over the economy has been shattered. Added to this the India traditional legislations have been justifying the freedom less of the servant class. But the servant communities like Devadasi and entertaining communities were given donations in the feudalistic system. During the Vijayanagar dynasty, several taxes were imposed and collection would be given to servant communities. 'Dombariya pannu' is one such collection of tax. The collection was given to Domba for exhibiting and performing the skills and arts. The Domba were entertaining the people wandering from place to place (ibid, p - 227). In many parts of Andhra Pradesh during the Vijayanagar dynasty several tax rebates were announced and tax were collected for leading life to these communities. Krishnakumari states that "Keeping the service rendered by the communities the barbers of the state were exempted from the tax structure. Along with barbers the other communities that were exempted from the tax are Domba, 'Besta' (fisher man), Dhobi and Golla. In some of the villages 'Dombara pannu' a common tax was paid by the villagers. Ramaraya ordered that the 'amara gram', umbalike grama, bhandarawada grama, Agrahara and temple villages are to be tax free. **Thurston** says that "the Nellore Tahasildar had given permission to Domba to collect tax as 'mirasi' in the form of donation. Even at Mysore district the Domba were permitted to collect tax as 'Dombara lingada veerakanike'. But they were supposed to be like children of local land lords and abide with regulations, this was the practice followed till 1891 in the borders of Andhra Pradesh". Domba also have served as soldiers and sculptors. Therefore it was possible for a performing community like Domba to retain their occupation because of patronization of the kings and landlords, but could not escape from the social humiliations. And also in the history the community could not make a definite source of economy. The land that was the primary source of economy and Domba tried consistently to get the land but failed miserably and the story of a Domba in Karnataka is much popular. This story depicts the effort of an nomad in finding out a definite economic source and he looks like a representative of all the nomadic communities.

Even to this day there are lands that were given as donation to Domba in Karnataka. There is a story prevalent till day at Byrapatna of Channapatna taluk in Karnataka there is a land given to a Domba. The villagers did not cultivate almost about 110 acres of land for a long period. The Horticulture department took about 40 acres of land in 1968. Most of the present nomads believing in their performance and handicraft skills while depending on the kings and continued their professions for survival. Thurston gives a reference that The Domba was serving as musicians at kings of Jaipur. And some of them used to play flute and wander from house to house. Even the Domba at Bellary shows a land near Sundur and tell that it was given by the Vijayanagar kings. Also tell that later it was taken away by the Palegar and land lords. Even to this day the Domba proudly claims that they were the performers of the Vijayanagar palace and were given donations that are evident in Jammala Madugu, Tadapatri, Paddatturu and Gudumacherla areas. After the collapse of Vijayanagar the Domba were spread across Mysore region. Overall, these communities without having definite economic source had to depend on local producing classes. Understanding the nomadic communities and its economic sources, the occupation of certain nomads has been taken over by the industrialisation with all its technological advancement has handed over to capitalists. There were no ways that the nomadic communities could establish industries based on their traditional occupations in this unequal Indian society. The modern industrialists used the skills but forgot the communities that were practicing the skills. It is a sordid story of the communities that depended on the performing arts. The more media pushed the traditional performers to the corner. The feudal kings lost their strength to take care of the communities like Helava and Dakkaliga. One significant aspect is that the communities like 'Uchalya' were ready to give up their profession. Carrying the shit and being untouchables how could they remain in their traditional occupations? These communities have often faced the situation either to give up their traditional occupation or trying hard to retain the same. Therefore, the nomadic communities without any definite economic source are seen throughout the history.

## The turbulent walk of Nomadic groups

The majority of the nomadic groups of the present did not have

immovable property as definitive economic source in their history. They were forced to be dependent on producing class. Agriculture, the primary occupation of India could not taken by these communities since they had no traditional preparation to become farmers. The lands given as donations were not cultivated by these communities. Separating themselves from Domba community and still depending on exhibition of circus on the streets are still grappling with this problem. The people converted into Islam have become the caste people. They made adventure and martial art as their profession. Though they got land as donation but did not become farmers. The elders of this community proudly say that their caste people were given land as donation to esteemed people of their community at Mantur of Mudhol taluk also at Savalagi, Gothe and Gadhyala in Jamakhandi taluk. It is pertinent most the land that are donated is found in Bijapur district. But today most of lands are not in their hands. They have sold it long back; some of the lands are taken by the farmers. Even after getting land they did not get involve in agricultural activities and also did not stay permanently in those areas. Therefore, even if the land was there but did not become the economic source among these nomads and also the control over the land given in this form depended on the local land lord. This donation would be part of production activities. If the land lord did not like the land would go to someone else or it would be suspended. The feudal system of the middle age and the agricultural activities were distorting the regulations brought by moguls. Like this the land given in the form of donation too had many restrictions.

There were two kinds of land donation in India. The first one is that the lands were given for the supportive role played by the landless laborers. The second one was that of gift which was given to priests and Matt. These lands are called as 'inam lands'. But there are differences in these land donations. The first one depends on the labour given and taken and to those who have inculcated the agrarian practices and to the doctors and performing artists like the Domba. This donation has to be given to the community that supplements the entire production activities of the village. But most of the time the chieftain of the village or the official donate the land with certain conditions. When the conditions were over ruled naturally the officials had the power to take back the land. Therefore there were no

hopes of definite economic source from the land for these communities. On the face value the land is exempted from the tax and revenue fee, but was enjoyed by the local land lords. The artisans and entertainment class did not cultivate these lands but during the harvest season a share was given to the artisans since the entire village is to take of the land. But there was equality among the communities that were dependent on the share or who could get income. They have to live under the mercy of local village community. And also the land lord used to be from upper caste, these communities would always were exploited by the land lord. Though they would get land but never became the owner of it. There is no clue in the entire inscriptions or literary works in Karnataka about the Holeyas becoming the land owners. Agriculture as a profession is prohibited to them. There is direct link between this prohibition and the social justice based on the Hindu religious text. The artisans and the performing communities always were at the border of the hierarchical society. We have seen that the Domba inevitably accepting heinous jobs and remained as untouchables. 'Permission was given to construct the houses on the out skirts for these communities and also the land donated to them was not fertile'. Since they did not have the ownership over the land, the farmers only used to cultivate and during harvest they were given a share. Therefore, we cannot see the economic status of artisan and performing community within the traditional regulations of the society. The service rendered by these communities for the village was like contractual basis (Irfan Habib, The agrarian system of Mughal India, 1556 - 1707, p - 156, 1999). These communities were eligible only to receive donations based on their services. This is supplementary to the Karma philosophy of Hindu wherein the downtrodden communities are there to serve the upper castes. The feudal system to justify themselves had used the evidences of the tradition. Therefore, we cannot see the caste system separate from feudal system. The landlordism is an integral part of the Indian hierarchy. The communities that rendered services were thus born as dependents by the land owning society. **The devotional** movement and reformist movement of the middle age though tried to strengthen these communities; it could not see a big success since these movements had the lacunae of strong ideological base. It colorfully took the poverty of the lower caste and

justified the social equality. These movements did not give much emphasis on the economy that would improve social standards. Rather reformation within the system was the main aim of these movements. They did not condemn the economic disparities like social disparity. The vyshya, banajiga or the official or the king did not become the point of criticism, anger like the Brahmins. The limitation of the movement was the reason. Therefore, the movement could bring in self assertion of the lower communities but did not have the intention of bringing economical equality. Economic equality is possible only through confrontation. The devotional movements tried to bring in social reforms. Therefore, the lower caste and the communities dependent on landlords in the middle age could not give up their traditional occupations. On the one hand the lower caste status because of the birth thereby given occupation made them economical dependents and never brought sustainability to these communities.

The professional singers and performers communities had to depend on the kings. Always wait for their gift and donations. These communities were invited on some occasions for singing and dancing by the rich and the land lords and were given gifts. Also the villagers took care of them by giving money. So they have to wait eagerly for these opportunities. The professional singers, performers and Domba always entertained surrounded people. They were at least getting some gifts or donations from the king or the landlord. But when the land became primary source of economy the dependent unproductive communities economically perished. It was inevitable for them go in search of economic resource. In the Indian history of middle age, the nomads depended economically and lived as unproductive groups. They had to depend economically for their traditional occupation and expect the gift and donations from the rulers. Therefore, it became imminent for the communities depending on performance and handicrafts to migrate to other places. The communities that were dependent on the gifts and donations were disturbed with the economic activities of the middle age.

The land related acts formulated during Moghal regime snatched away the traditional rights of these communities. To substantiate we can look into the writings of historian Irfan Habib and Russian writer

Midumoye "During the middle age of Moghal rule especially in North India, the agriculture gradually became the primary economical industry thus lot of prominence was given to agriculture and also more land came under cultivation". And also acts came into existence pertaining to agriculture and land revenue. The Zamindari system of Moghal thus considered land as private property. Farmers became contractors; the inam land went into the hands of landlords. Those communities who could not pay the revenue, their lands were taken away by the landlords. These lands were nothing but inam lands given by the king to the artisans and performing artists. The lands were given to non agricultural communities like artisans.

Hiroshi pakajava who has done extensive study on the agricultural pattern of South India during middle age mentions three kinds of land holdings. 'Mirasi's' means those who own the land permanently as inheritance. 'Upera's' - means farmers. These farmers have taken the land from the government for agricultural activities and pay revenue. The third group is 'Inamdar's'. These Inamdar's have taken the land from the government but do not pay the revenue or if paid partially. These too have inherited the land. Hiroshi documents that there are several laws and legislations for these kinds of inherited lands. Normally, these Inamdar's are those who depend on handicrafts and performing arts. It is common often they migrate, and many a time these groups are not to be seen for a long time. Hiroshi records these communities as extinct families. The families having traditional ownership over the land disappears for a long time that agricultural land would be taken as private property by the head of the village or 'Patel' of the village who have bestowed with this power. The then government had given the rights to Patel or the headman to utilize the waste land or non agricultural land. Because of these reason the non agricultural communities though got inam lands had no power over the same. Particularly during company rule the agriculture related acts were further tightened that hampered the definite source of these communities for the first time and left only with their traditional occupation. Therefore there was other ways for artisan and servant communities to be nomads.

During the colonial rule the laws related to land and revenue were further tightened. The British came to India to loot the natural resources of the Country; the lands of tribal and non agricultural communities were forcibly acquired. Warren Hasting brought the legislation with certain changes to the Moghal land act in 1793. The Russian writer who studied extensively the economic situation of India during colonial period writes about the land act of Warren Hastings:

"The 1793 act of 'Permanent Zamindari' was implemented strictly in North India. The impact of this act resulted in taking over the lands of artisans and performing artists who had inherited the land through 'inam' by zamindars and revenue collectors. British brought this legislation to collect revenue or the land tax without difficulties had the characteristics of feudalism. This forced many communities to migrate towards South from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. Also the sudden raise of industrialisation in the North compelled other communities to migrate that were dependent on cottage industry. Supplementing the same Irfan Habib states that 'the land tax was heavy in particular the north western and western States of North India between 1820 to 1850'. The ambition of British to cultivate commercial crops took away the lands of the weaker section. The changes in the land holdings in the central and Northern parts disturbed the dependent communities. After prohibiting the inam, gift and lease many communities of the North had to migrate to South where the Moghal rule was not that strong. Many of the nomadic communities of Karnataka say that they have been migrated from Maharashtra, Odisha, Assam, Bengal, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. The primary reason for this is that the agrarian relations became more complex during the Mughal and British company period. The modern land ownership changed the crop system with commercialisation in the central and Northern India. As the profit were reaped more and more likewise the rules to get changed. The agriculture was more commercialised during the company administration resulting in many of the small land holding farmers lost the land and by 19th century two prominent groups came into being as the landless and land owners. The land struggle of Adivasis took place during this period. The Adivasis and other lower caste communities who had lost land rebelled against company rule.

Meanwhile, for the first time a deadly legislation was brought in the North known as Criminal Tribes Act, 1871.

## Criminal Tribes Act and the Nomadic groups

The Act is most inhuman and purely imperialist in nature of colonial rule. This was brought out primarily to have control over the communities like nomads, Adivasis and artisans that were integrating agrarian relations in India. It has been said that the act was brought for law and order situation, but inherently it has economic and political reason of the colonial rule. That can be summarised as follows;The artisans perpetuated the cottage industry in the village self- rule system

1. The local traditional knowledge pertaining to cottage industry was protected
2. through generations by the artisans
3. The artisans depended economically on the trading nomadic communities for their produce
4. The artisans had an inseparable relation with agrarian activities. They inculcated and imbibed the agriculture technology and skills. They played a pivotal role in the overall production of the village.
5. The tribal have been living in mysterious world of forest and they belong to mysterious society. Having their rules and regulations they have involved in agriculture in fertile lands of valleys and hills.
6. The traditional India is alive in the tribal society. They have been kept out of caste system and they hate the people of the mainstream and live with their own social norms.
7. The fertile lands of river bed and valleys are in the hands of tribes. They cannot take over the land unless they are controlled
8. The nomads became inevitable through their activities for the Indian society. The trading nomadic communities worked like a bridge between the village and towns thereby established inter relations

9. Some of the nomads have worked as spies and soldiers in the army of the kings and were part of the local administration
10. The nomads were sincere to feudal system because of the dependency and also retaining their traditional occupations. 1. Communities of performing arts, depending on traditional occupation, the servant communities and the bondage communities have given the shoulders for the safety of feudal system and were an integral part of it. The feudal system that protects the nomads economically hence the nomads are sincere to their local land lords. Since they are also the soldiers they also stood for protection of landlords.[19]

Some of the nomadic groups had the privilege of social positions in the rule of local kings. And also they did not face financial crisis during the feudal system. The incomes were unperturbed since the servant class had given specific work in the feudal system. The hunters, dancers, singers, mahout and camel rearing communities were busy in their work. The cattle rearing community Golla used to get gifts from the Mysore Kings in the pre-colonial period. Likewise, the cattle rearing nomadic community in Rajasthan got cultivable lands from the ruling class. The rules of the company administration completely changed production relations. 'The 1871 Criminal Tribes Act became a weapon for the officials of the company administration. The company gave the rights to its administrative officers of enforcing this act on to control the Adivasis who were on the fringes of the forest and also the nomads. The nomadic nature was considered as a crime. Basically who were the nomads were forcibly restricted. It was decided to issue license to those who wish to have a dignified living in the village. If any community wished to be nomad without license were immediately arrested and would target for investigation'. The communities hitherto lived freely in their lands became strangers and criminals. The communities realised their rights. The tribes who were living on the fringes of the forest and had the trade relationship too became the targets of this act. 'Before the rule of company the Adivasis of India were living independently on their own along with guarding the boundaries of the respective rulers. Adivasis ably handled this work in the army of Shivaji. The Adivasis were in the front row of the war when the company wanted

to invade any of the kingdoms. The kings would negotiate or make agreements with the company for their inevitability but the servant and Adivasis class had to fight. Therefore the act was bought to control the rebelled Adivasis and servant class against the company and the company army violently snubbed these communities.

G, N. Devi has made a list of communities that were brought under this act is the nomadic singer communities, Fakirs, small vendors, performers of performing arts and the communities that were carrying goods. The act was first implemented in the central, north western and northern states of India. After the commercialisation of agriculture and constitutional Zamindari system the economy of the communities that were dependent on handicrafts and performers completely collapsed. The lives of these communities were shattered as the ruling class that the communities were dependent became more and more inhuman and mechanical. The Indian agriculture that had the barter quality lost its tradition as the traditional agricultural practice turned into capitalistic agricultural system. More or less the feudal system that protected the servant class melted in the capitalistic production system of the company. The capitalist agricultural system had only the intention of more profit, rest of the issues became negligible. Also with the induction of machines in the agricultural sector the artisans and the constitution of traditional agricultural relations were cut down and the entertainment media becoming more advanced the entertaining communities were denied from their traditional dependency. It was inevitable for them to be nomads. They were naturally angry on the modern system that collapsed their traditional dependency, whenever possible these communities vehemently protested against the system. The so called 'criminal groups' came into being after the downfall of Rajputs. These groups identify their origin with Rajputs. The agrarian communities lost their cultivable lands during the rule of Muslim and company. The communities that were serving in the army of Rajput and as assistants to soldiers lost their base. The Communities that lost the base later involved in criminal activities. Many of the communities in the North India that lost their base naturally stood against the company administration. Also there were severe protests against the company from the soldiers of the local Palegars. The company at this

stage brought in several legislations to take over many kingdoms. The 'Assistant soldier system', Roulat act were implemented primarily to prohibit the locals to have weapons and ban the local soldiers.

**Criminal traveling of Nomads**

The history of India between 1774 and 1871 is the history of bloodshed. During this period the company administration did most cruel wars on the local states of India. Anglo - Maratha war, Mysore war, Surrender of Holkar, the defeat of Peshwes, The sipoy mutiny of Vellore, capturing of Mysore and Coorg, also capturing Sind, Sikh, Oudh areas through war and the sipoy mutiny of 1857 contributed many communities as homeless. These communities later transformed into nomads. It was inevitable for many of the local kingdoms to join hands with the company in the pre modern India or fight against the company. This led the local working class to become economically pauper. If they accept the company government the local king has to look after them. Many of the local kingdoms were in immense dilemma if they fight back there was danger losing their existence. Almost all the kingdoms were captured by the British administration. Those communities who went against were suppressed through the formation new legislations. And the criminal tribes Act ware introduced during the same period.

Although the Criminal Tribes Act came into being in 1871, but the company government had already made a list of communities declaring as dangerous by 1793 itself. This list is not available. The Rohilkhand which comprised of working class and was peaceful was captured by the British through a dreadful war in 1770. There were bloodshed and death, thus Rohilkhand was in the hands of British. But the working people who lived in peace were completely shattered. The people developed extreme anger against company rule. They started to take revenge on the British and the most of working class and Adivasis became nomads. As the company rule became stronger and stronger, the local kings retired and started receiving pension. The landlords retained their properties by compromising. But the working class lost everything. A historical inevitability propelled these people to fight against the company rule. And this struggle was bestowed on a clear political foundation. The struggle was for the restoration of

basic human rights like speech, questioning, self rule, protection of their properties and to protect their uniqueness with democratic values. But the anarchic situation of Indian politics had reached to zero. Still a few kingdoms alive were continuously fighting against the British rule. The communities which were fighting against the company being part of the king's army were tortured vehemently after the war. Example: After the defeat of Hyder and Tippu, the army was immensely humiliated by the British. They had no proper imagination about the Indian society. The British did not understand the communities like nomadic cattle rearers, professional singers, Adivasis, Dombaru, Gypsies, snake charmers and nomadic doctors. Always they doubted these communities. And naturally these communities were included in the list of criminal communities. **The Criminal** Tribes Act was implemented in 1871. The tragedy is that the communities that were in the list were considered by the company rule as criminals by birth. While imparting training to the police, the texts were introduced on how to identify the criminal tribes and also how to control them through the legislation. The mockery is that although India became independent through the handing over the power and this act was abolished in 1952 but the lessons in the police training did not change about the criminal tribes. The independent India taught them to identify these communities under Habitual offender act. Though this law seems to identify an individual or a community as criminal but had an aim of targeting 127 people of the denotified communities even after Independence. This act considered the crime as decease and the criminal as deceased. Even after Independence, till this day, many communities have to go to police station to sleep on new moon day. **The** 1921 Criminal Tribes Act was extended to Madras, Hyderabad and Mysore areas. This was the time of Mahatma Gandhi to enter into freedom movement. All the civilians of India were looking strangely the criminal tribes. But still the colonial rule went on adding working class in the south to the criminal tribes list. **The** communities that were dependent on cottage industries in India were collapsed and economically became baseless due the industrialisation of colonialism. These communities were utterly defeated in front of technological advancement. The basket weaving Medar community, the black smith who was producing agricultural equipments,

Domba depending on their Dombarata, the Shillekyatha who were experts in leather puppets became dull in front of electronic media and technological advancement. The industrialisation during the colonial period rapidly changed the Indian self production system. The colonials established the industries here only to loot the human and natural resources of the third world.

Although this process lead to many changes in the traditional social system of India. The caste communities that could not withstand its traditional occupation in the modern world lost the base. The communities that could not capitalise their traditional economic occupations in the modern world were shattered. The performing arts and artisans communities were prominent among them. The eminent sociologist like M.N.Srinivas forgets that the aspirations of the communities that were dependent on cottage industry and say that the modernisation and industrialisation has brought in revolutionary social changes in India. The Indian society passing from traditional feudal clutches to capitalistic production system, there was no change in the socio economic situations of the down trodden communities. Although it seems there were some concessions for the lower castes in the modern period but there were no major changes in their economic equality. There are several superstitious beliefs among us about modernisation that is the modernisation with its technological knowledge would put on right track the traditional and unequal economic system of India. There would be metamorphisms through the revolutionary change in the production equipments in the traditional production system of India and also believed that it would clearly bring changes in the social relationships. But it brought capitalistic production method along with modern technology to India. This modernisation brought the social relationships of the feudalism within the frame of capitalistic production. In this context the society trying to adjust to the capitalistic production system, also brought in few changes in the hierarchical social relationships. But there were no major changes in the unequal economic system of India. This can be substantiated with Domba community. The feudalistic relationships are thickly narrated in the written biographies of nomadic communitie. The imminent explosion of nomadic biographers is the result of their biographies. The communities never face

to literacy and without their cultural characteristics, without history and without being in the memory like fossils, they are only texts seen here and there. This explains the life of the communities in many ways. 'Dalit Panther' was established due to Ambedkar consciousness in Maharashtra. As the Ambedkar consciousness expanded, many of the completely repressed communities at least perceived to antagonize the cruelty of the system. During those confronting situation as a representative voice of the nomadic communities books like 'Uchalya', Gabaala, Alemariya Antharanga, Gondhaligya, Bayala Benneri and Uparya autobiographies have come.

The writer of Uchalya condemns deeply about the tragic situation of his community and his life. The disgraceful occupation of his community thereby the social implications make blur the self conscious of the writer. The rejection of the villagers, police torture, the dumb government and the main stream social system imposes the individual to be an orphan. Gaikwad says that his biography is an effort to find out who is the reason for this orphan consciousness. This life would be a long lasting cursed life. It is unimaginable that the journey between the Uchalya communities imposed occupation which is degraded and insulting and the society that encourages this kind of disgraceful occupation. The self hatredness that developed within Gaikwad is because of the loneliness and the politics of pushing them to corner.

The insulting darkness spreads all over. The writers of 'Alemariya Antharanga' by Kuppe Nagaraj, 'Gondhaligya' of Madari, 'Bayala Benneri' by Balagurumurthy have undergone this kind of journey. These writers while experiencing the insult and humiliation and looks through X ray eye to come out of this situation and the liberation of their communities. This cannot be nothingness but can be said as hopeful morrows. This symbolically represents that preparing them with Ambedkar consciousness to struggle and confront to nomadic communities who have no caste identity. More of 'Gabaala' though explains in cold but the burning within him expresses like a volcano in his biography. This doctrine view stands like a hand post for the next generation. Even if the new generations forgets, but reading these books creates a vast social backdrop. The writer's

acute poverty and the confrontation with social behavior looks like a liberation of Gondhalis in Gondhaligya book. In this long cursed journey, the consciousness that roses within individual opens up the social and cultural life of communities. The individual centric incidents simultaneously become the expression of the community.

Some of the written biographies particularly that have come with influence of Dalit Panther have taken up for study - Uchalya by Laxman Gaikwad, Gabaala by Mullarisab More and Akkaramashi by Sharanakumar Limbale have been taken in this regard. Also Budgajangama, Sudugaadu siddha, Budganaada that explains the cultural life of nomads, Alemariya Antharanga, Gondhaligya and Bayala Benneri have taken in Kannada. Along with this, Government Brahman, Urukeri, Manegara and 'Juthan' published on Hindi and other articles on nomads published in Telugu also have taken to uphold the cultural importance of nomadic groups in written format.

The biography of 'Yethina kilari boraiah' of Myasa Beda has also taken for the study. The writer of Uchalya in his "Manogatha" or preface in his book discusses the society that rejected him. The writer is angry against the system that compelled to live like animals for thousands of years. Laxman Gaikwad belonging to 'Gunhegaar' community places the society as convict for making his community to depend on stealing to survive. He transforms into a activist with experience of the movement. He criticizes the middle class and intellectuals for not responding to the tragic life of nomads along with giving a call to his community to organise against these kind social studies. "The world is like masks dance, if you want see that properly do not stand in the place where you have been stood".

He demands that everyone should be responsible for creating the cruelest inequality of caste system as the baby of hierarchy. The inevitable stealing to overcome hunger on one side, on the other, the prestigious society without any shame stealing crores of rupees and enjoying the life to the core. The corruption has gained the social status and on the other all the rights of the nomads have been snatched and rejected.

Although, the criminal tribes were declared as denotified tribes in 1952 but in the eyes of the police and the society the unfortunate nomads have remained as thieves.

"Just as the army produced handbooks to aid its recruiting officers in the selection of the finest 'fighting races' so the police department produced works..... Which listed criminal communities, identified their social and physical characteristics, recounted their myths and criminal lore and described the hallmarks of their criminal trade'.[20]

The 1871 Criminal Tribes Act has given these kind clear instructions to police and it has been over and again told to officers in all the trainings of police department. Also history of nomads means the characteristics of the community to identify them are also taught. Within the jurisdiction of one officer if there is any theft, he immediately doubts and searches for nomadic communities of that area. This has gone to the extent of that the leaders of the nomad community has to go to police station every month and put the signature thereby inhumanly killing their psyche through creating laws and regulations. The similar kind of confrontation is seen among the African tribes. Therefore, a nomad undergoing this intense torture comes out like this;

'They hunted me, hunted me
Hounded me ever
I was a crime, they said
I was a crime
And my honest intentions
Were scorned all the more
I was branded as the criminal kind
So I gave up my struggle
For I was a 'crime' yes I was A crime
With the rest of my fellows
The sicar I fought
Being marked as the criminal tribe'
The soliloquy of an unknown nomad of

'Yerakula Criminal tribe' haunts me which as follows;

For us a pathway to heaven
Has made
For tribes of the criminal kind
"At last we wake up to the fact
And thought
I am no longer a crime
I am no longer a crime
I am living by industry
Honestly wrought
And have changed from the
Criminal mind".
So all hands to work
Through the storm or the calm
We will rescue the crime
And rid this fair land from
Menace and harm
The tribes of the criminal kind[21]
(dishonored by History, Meena Radhakrishanan, p - 151)

**Self hatredness and Liberation:**

This society is not allowing the nomads to live honestly. The biography of Laxman Gaikwad "Gunhedaar" is a biopic of his community instigated within for organising of criminal tribes under the social pressure. Uchalya has come in that situation wherein there was no social environment to live honestly even without education.

Looking at his grandfather going to the police station twice a day has remained lonely feeling and orphan feeling in Laxman permanently. His grandfather in drunkard state goes to steal from a old man in a sandy using a blade but instead of cutting the dhoti he cuts the thigh. Then the grandfather was invaded by police saying tell us where all you have kept

the money otherwise you would get beatings, the grandfather says there is nothing at home, they police said the wife will know and she was beaten holding her hair. They beat all the members in the family particularly the grandmother was dragged and beaten (Uchalya - 11)

Looking at all these scenarios how can a weeping boy get patriotic and melodies. Instead it provokes intense inferiority and anger. Simultaneously this is expression of all the nomads of India. Especially the police system is a nightmare among the nomads. "Many a time I have toileted in my shorts when the police had come for checking the house and beating". Grandfather was hated since he started to hand over the caste thieves to the police. They cannot starve because of grandfather. The elders of the community came together since the women and children were dying in hunger. They decided to do something about this. And one fine day, they ransacked the house, took out the roofing, grandfather was inserted cloth in the mouth and finally they hit him with axe and murdered him. And also without the notice of anybody they burnt the body. From that day onwards the responsibility of the house fell on grandmother" (Uchalya - 11). The Uchalya community is known by many names in Maharashtra. The community is known as Pathroot, Takari, Bhamta, Uchale, Giravivaddara and Ghantichor. This is the problem of all nomadic communities in India. Having no idea of what is caste? They did not get the education to be aware of the constitution, its benefits and reservation. Each nomadic group perceived the caste as the locals had called them and socially never united. They fly in groups the nooks and corner of the Country did not meet at one place. Many communities in Karnataka itself are facing identity crisis.

The Budgajangama has been called locally as 'hagaluvesha davaru', Burrakathe, Byragi, Balasantha, Beggers and they perceived it as their caste, today there are facing the identity crisis.

Although the Budgajangama and Sudugaadu siddha are same community but living as separate communities. Chennadasar, Gosangi, Sindhollu, Handijogi, Shillekyatha and Hakki Pikki communities are facing similar kind of identity crisis. The identity crisis of these nomads are not confined to Karnataka alone rather all the nomadic communities are facing

this problem across the country and all the Governments of this country have neglected it. Gaikwad's 'Uchalya' in the present has become the soliloquy of the broken unfortunate nomad communities of India.

The violence is defeated only against more violence. They are learnt how to steal in Gantichor community. They follow the same tradition that has been perpetuated. (In the hot afternoon made to sleep on the sand, taking out the shorts and the chili powder is inserted in the buttocks despite pleading. When toileted for the heat they leave us. He cannot tolerate the heat and jumps into a river and be in the water for a long time. Morrow is sandy, don't you steal something and bring? (Uchalya)

'Definitely I will bring, their beating are far better than yours, police do not torture like you, from to tomorrow onwards I start stealing (Uchalya). Then he is given roti and fried fish. From then on Dada becomes professional in stealing'.

The nomads never adjusted to the so called structured school system. When Laxman Gaikwad went to school everyone teased him as 'Uchalya' caste. The villagers look us in rejection when we kill a cat and eat it. They stop giving water to this Uchalya community. Here the experience is not individual centric. The writer merges with the anguish cry of the community. The saints of our classical heritage does not become face to face instead the sordid communities are used just for information.

The life of women among the nomads is barbaric. Many of them who talk about women liberation escape from this harsh reality. To feed the entire family at last they get into immoral activities, to feed the children they become prostitutes. Even to this these horrifying situations are prevalent among nomads. The writer who goes to school and caught by the police 'son of a bitch, has your father any time gone to school? I will put you in jail, there you can learn' this is how the nomad children are seen.

Education taught rationale thinking power in me. Why god did give me this punishment? The writer consciousness looks at the present. The writer who goes to bhajans, temple and to listen to Ramayan is teased by Govind patil 'you belong to the caste who eat pig and cat and you want

to memorize Ramayan'. When he joins the textiles he pulls eighty kilos weight. When the writer goes to Aurangabad remembers the oration of a Russian "There is discrimination between the owner and the worker in Russia. All of them are fine" for which Laxman Gaikwad quizzes why not in India? For which he does not answer properly. This consciousness came out of education makes him to think to find out the address of our lane that are lost. Symbolically on Independence Day the nomads utter Nehru and Gandhi. The writer who marries within the Gunhegaar community explains the family life. When he realises that no one will rent out the house for Gunhegaar, he lies about his caste. But same time aspires to organise the nomads on the street and pavement.

In between the writer who goes against working in the textile industry with the conspiracy of the police lathi charge takes place. The writer files a case when the workers seriously injured. The Goondas follow the writer, but the management is successful in dividing the workers union into two separate division kick out the workers including the writer. Ultimately for survival the writer runs autorikshaw. In between the writer runs a tea shop which under goes a loss. He starts to sell the vegetables. Meantime his in laws come to the same place for pick pocketing remains there, and then the writer starts a dairy.

The writer starts a petty shop and spends money to the hospital for the treatment of his father. But when the father is dead there is no money for cremation. It is common to be in this sort of situation for an organiser of nomadic forums. Finally he joins City Corporation as a cleaner. Frustrated with the corruption there he throws the resignation letter and comes back home.

He organises the first convention of nomadic groups in 1978. The atrocities on Uchalya community, the writer as a leader of his community calls the district S.P at 2 'O' clock in the night and they arrive early in the morning. He takes part in the movement that demands to name Marathawada University to put Ambedkar name and goes to jail. The leaders of nomadic groups who want the social justice perceive Ambedkar as their leader. The writer being a social activist organises the nomadic communities like Uchalya, vaddara, Gosavi, Kaikaadi, Gondali, Bills and

Lambani takes out a morcha. Balakrishna renuke, Laxman mane too take part in these morcha. But the District Collector does not come for the morcha saying that he is busy. The entire media and intellectuals of Maharashtra condemn this act.

The pressure of few people the writer contests for Lok sabha elections from BSP party. But nobody supports and back out. Then the decision is taken to support the Congress candidate, collect the expenses towards the rickshaw speaker, he walks out of the election with a request that winning candidate should help the nomads. But this stand is not liked by the co workers. They allege that he has taken lakhs of rupees from Congress and the writer feels that he is a victim of politics.

He sold his motor cycle to set up a shop for his wife and dedicates himself as a full time worker for organising the nomads.

The primary points to be raised in Uchalya as follows; this is an experience of nomads of India at the same time the experience of activists of nomadic organisations. It is false that the administrators of this Country would change the future since they have become deaf and dumb. It is sarcasm in the history of post independent India that the officials taking salaries from the collection of tax paid by common man of this country are more corrupt and do not respond to the agonies of the poor and have become the feudal kings.

There may be a few exceptions. But it is not exaggeration that the officials are the enemies of nomads. They have stage a struggle to get the caste certificate in the present. Having no relationship with land they have no documents of any sort. The nomads who were supposed to get the basics like ration card, voters ID, caste certificate have not been given. The protagonist's life of Uchalya is the story of all the nomads. The incidents are not of past but the story of the present.

But when the voice rose in favor of exploited and demanding for social justice cheat themselves being the beneficiary of the development. But those who defend the Ambedkar philosophy and heirs of social justice always work for the exploited world.

"The mental need to identify self provokes the imagination power of one community'.

Ambedkar says as a conformist that who does not know the history cannot create history. Here history means the consciousness of the tradition; Gaikwad of Uchalya has a limitation despite documenting the heinous life of his community but could not think the other layers that are the reasons for it. How can it be possible for a society without education can search the various layers of the tradition? It is also inhuman to expect from the neglected small and small criminal tribes.

After contesting for the election from BSP and taking financial help from a few honest workers of BSP, withdrawing from the contest and supporting the congress candidate only highlights the uncertainty, confusion and dilemma of nomads.

It is also self deceiving act to take money towards the expenses of Auto and speaker. If Gaikwad had not written this in his autobiography then the people would have made public his hypocrisy.

Baba sahib while explaining the future of Dalit says that if possible pulls the wheels of the chariot of social justice to the front but do not pull it backwards for any reason. But in his biography the leader of nomad claims to have been influenced by Ambedkar philosophy, but leads to discussion about his walking out of election taking money, to justify the inevitability of supporting congress candidate and claiming to be a victim of political vendetta.

Even after six to seven decades of Independence, the party who poses like defender of social justice has not come out with any manifestation or National seminar on nomads and the least is that have not identified the nomads. This is the grave negligence of all the parties that have ruled this Country.

The masks of the parties who have always please the upper caste and do vote bank politics are one and the same. Gaikwad who gave explanation that in this kind of situation he had given support to Congress. The liberation of communities lies in realising the moral and philosophical

base of nomadic communities that have been living under heinous situation in the present. It is a lie that through money and benefits a community is developed.

Many communities living in acute poverty but have culturally meaningful social system. On the outset it many look they are indifferent but have the inner mental capacity of building any sort of movement that is seen in the history of India. Even to this day it is inspirational how the Santhals and Munda have fought against the British.

However, Uchalya is the first book in the Indian literature to introduce the nomadic world to civic world and it is successful for making the Indian society to be in guilty and those who were defending social justice have induced for introspection. It begins as individual centric also the integral story of Indian nomads. This invokes discussion on various aspects of nomadic life. The influence of Dalit Panther spread to all forms of literary expressions in the 70's. Especially in Marathi the influence was clearer on biographies. The biographies thus supplemented and inspired the social movements and became revolutionary forms. The Marathi autobiographies 'Athavanichi pakshi' by sonakamble, 'Baluth' by Dayapawar, 'Upara' by Laxman mane, 'Gabaala' by Mallari sab more, 'mala udvasthvayache ahe' by Mallika shekar, 'Akkar Mashi' by Sharanakumar Limbale and also recently translated 'Valmiki' by Sarjukatkar are prominent Marathi autobiographies. Many of these biographies have been translated to various languages in the world. These biographies written by the bottom level writers hailing from these communities hence it is more than their caste story has become the story of the exploited communities.

It is significant that the stories of Dalit communities rendering service to the upper caste people in the village were conscious about the confrontation for their existence while turmoil in the fire of untouchability and inequality, the nomad life is further degraded. The nomads without being conscious like Dalit remained still as orphans.

There are few denotified communities still labeled as criminal tribes. Dombaru, Pardhi, Korama, Sudugaadu Siddha, Yerakula, Banjara, Beda, Bamta, Handijogi, Kapemari, Kondadora, Madiga, Mala, Pichaguntla and

other communities are enlisted. Although nomadic nature is common but their traditional occupations are different. Criminal tribe like Domba retained their performing art as their life savior. Sudugaadu siddha, Budgajangama, Hagaluvesha depended on 'Modiyata'. Communities like Hakki Pikki, Pardhi, Yanadi and Yerakula stick to hunting. Bylapathar, Ghisadi, Lohar communities depended on handicrafts.

Gabaala: is the biography of Mallari sab more of Gondali (Budabuduki) community. Gabaala is the story of Mallari sab more becoming educated born in the community of begging while singing Gondali. The prohibition of begging act was brought in Bombay province in 1959 and it states,

``soliciting or receiving alms, in a public place whether or not under any pretence such as singing, dancing, fortune telling, performing or offering any article for sale....."[22]

'Having no visible means of subsistence and wandering about or remaining in any public place in such condition or manner, as makes it likely that the person doing so exist soliciting or receiving alms' (Bombay prevention of begging act).

Nomadic communities living helplessly without the awareness of any social change or acts continued begging despite the prevention and prohibition. The story of writer gabaala is the story of the Gondali society. The writer clarifies it in the beginning that it is biography of his community.

"Ever since I am aware I have tried to put forth the life of the society that is miserable, painful and neglected".[23]

Gabaala seems like a representative symbol of nomads. 'Jolige' (a cloth material used to put alms) torn into pieces is called as 'gabaala'. The nomads look like gabaala for the people of upper strata of India. The saturated Indian societies have perceived the talent of nomads and their cultural contributions to this Country and their cultural uniqueness as 'gabaala'. The false totalitarian consciousness never considered to analyse, study the cultural expressions of nomads and also as part of equal life. The thinking in the academic world too contributed for this.

Gondali tribe (Budabuduki, joshi) lived as religious beggars. Their pattern of life and the social structures hesitates to call as a community. Only through a few social characteristics the sociologists called them a community. It is a group of people who have not managed the important work of the community.

While learning in the school he grows looking at the begging of his community. Although learning in the school but the writer explains the inevitability of carrying the begging bowl.

'I had worn only the torn shorts on buttocks; rest of the body is bare, went into the town, each one went into one lane, I had no information about begging, went to in front of a house

'You would win, Laksmi blesses

There is success; aunty put a piece of roti'

A woman listening to this

How come so many people have come, why is there drought in other place? Go; go to hell, if you cannot make living why do you disturb us? When I went to another house controlled my emotions and decided firmly stood repeating the same. A person came out from the house 'yeh, boy, would you stay back to clean the cattle shed, you caste is comfortable by eating free food, go... go that side" gabaala).

When he goes further a dong follows him. The childhood among nomads is like this. The biography is the story of all nomads, though the content is same differs in management methods. It was a common experience that while wandering the length and breadth of the country grandfather or grannies would die, sometime the children used to die because of deceases. It was common to bury in a deserted place of the deceased. These incidents are told by nomads throughout their life recalling memories. They live emotionally with the community. It is in practice that the dead is buried in the pits of streams.

With all the short comings going to school was a celebration. The community perceiving that sending children to school means an entry into unknown world, hence, children are not sent to school. When Mallari sab

went to school his entire clan was looking at him. 'Harikeshvalaad' treats him with love and helps him to find new horizon. Similar kind warm love was given by guru 'ambavadekar' to Ambedkar. This kind of human relationship that happens accidently can be called as mystery. More getting this kind of beginning becomes the first educated person among his community - Budabuduki. The Gondali society sings oral poetry and folk narratives are not criminal tribes. But being religious beggars many Gondali artists groups remained in the shadow of main stream communities. Most of the families have not come out nomadic nature.

The nomads are lost in false entertainment and religious dangling without having the cultural and political consciousness.

The boy who was suppose to write the final year exams again goes with his nomads from place to place for begging and perceives the begging is more happier than his studies seems the way that as the weakness of the social movement and unable to organise and with developing a personality through the studies.

"My helpless nomadic life I would stand neatly at least to some extent. I am in dark about my future. How can other things help to a traveler who is in dark".

The soliloquy in the last page of Gabaala does not become the soliloquy of the community, an individual hiding from collectivism to individualism.

The studying nomadic boy with the experience of his nomadic life and 'Colonial nerves' can be a light to the community. It is sad to say these helpless disappointments. When we have the harsh confrontation of personal life of Ambedkar, a nomad saying that the darkness is his friend only shows the limitation of the individual.

'To go back to my traditional forms of society means an effort to recreate the broken and disfigured consciousness of Africans against the invading culture'.

From this point of view, the struggle life of Laxman Gaikwad of Uchalya forgets all the weakness and establishes the umbilical card

relationship of the communities. Gabaala does not have this kind of intensity. Although gabaala is the biography of Gondali tribe yet it is successful in establishing the diversified aspects of nomadic world. This is a serious criticism about the writer's worldly view and commitment to self.

Both gabaala and Uchalya were published in 80's. With the influence of panther's movement along with autobiographies of Marathi, nomadic biographies too have come. Gaikwad has not studied much and Mallari sab more wrote gabaala during his B.com college days.

Nomads did not write in any of the Indian languages for two decades. Here the historically primal origin nomadic communities are perceived as nomads. By the way, in these three decades in many states research writings have come on nomads. With the interest of researchers, commissions and Government these books on communities have come. Later in the three decades no documentation has taken place on the changes or transformations on the social, economic, education, political and cultural spheres of nomadic communities.

After these three decades 'Bayala benneri' biography of nomad is a phenomenal book from all the aspects. Like Gaikwad of Uchalya, born in criminal tribe community known as Budgajangama. Also the same community is called as Sudugaadu Siddaru in many parts of the State. But no other nomadic community has got the constitutionally given caste identity in the State. This created several problems for the youngsters born in nomadic communities. Because of their ancestors or the nomadic nature several unpleasant problems were faced by younger generation.

We see the nomadic world in the biography of Bayala Benneri by Balagurumurthy. The childhood of the writer is deeply covered by nomadic nature, like the Uchalya society, the Budgajangama lived in tents, wandering from place to place with burrakatha and in the form of hagaluvesha and Kondamama and if they could bring grains or anything that confirmed the food for the day. Along with this the elders drunkard state at the outskirts of the town, the grannies going into the town in the night for begging and again the next it is a repetition. The writer who

grows in this kind environment accidently gets an opportunity to look into the lives of village communities and their life on the veranda of Gowda at Medahalli. The development of the writer goes in this way juxtaposing important historical dichotomies. The basis of these dichotomies are many.

The economic changes that take place in the lives of nomadic tribes has been described in this essay. By economic changes what is meant is the changes in their vocations. This essay attempts to capture them. How did the nomadic tribes get formed in the hierarchical structure of India? Who are nomadic tribes? What is being an nomadic tribes? Let us try to find out answers for these. First, the question - who are nomadic tribes? This is a question that does not expect an answer in a hurry. The social and politico-economical factors responsible for the formation of nomadic tribes are as complex as the Indian social system of which they are an integral part. The lower caste/communities that live and toil in India have crossed several stages due to social stratification in India. Nomadic tribes, too , have crossed all these stages. In other words, the politico-economical changes in India have clearly controlled the social relations too. Hence, the dominant feature of Indian society is the caste system. The chief purpose of the caste system is to justify the entire politico-economical condition through social stratification. Attempts to justify hierarchy have been going on continuously in Indian society by the minority ruling class which lives by converting the labour of the majority working class as its capital, and perpetuates inequality through some magic. The caste system formed as an unnatural social relationship between those who work and those who get work done. It is for this reason that hierarchy in India is more complex, and equally cruel, when compared with all unequal systems of the world.

``In India, caste means a production unit formed on the basis of division of labour. Every caste has always protected its identity as a self-contained productive unit. A caste has made its existence emotionally more precise through practices, mascot and language. A social group tries to stand apart from another group in its entirety in many ways by following its traditional vocation. Ambedkar says, "Being different is a natural consequence of caste". The rules that govern who should do certain jobs

and who should not do certain of them ushered hierarchy in India. The decision regarding the kind of vocations in which groups had to involve themselves in was dependent on the decisive victories and defeats attained by those social groups in the respective historical phases. The communities that lost had to inevitably follow the vocations that were available to them or were thrust upon them. Here, the victory of some communities means the dominance gained by them over economic resources that defined the fate of the entire society of those times. It was the practice of the victorious communities to gain definite ownership over such means of production from which the maximum production takes place in a society. The chief aim of communities which gained dominance over the society was to justify the method of work of toiling, productive communities in the name of tradition and to nurture its continuity. It is due to this reason that howmuchever the world has progressed due to technology, India continues defend traditional means of production. Therefore, revolutions of great significance did not take place in Indian systems of production. The changes that took place now and then did not bring anything noticeably new in the lives of the working classes of Indian society. The menial jobs that were available to castes on the basis of the "vocations assigned to the caste" were unavailable in the modern world and such castes could transcend their social humiliation. However, there was no change in the economic conditions of such castes."[24]

Therefore, India's stratification has a special place in human social history. Even if time has changed, revolutions have taken place in the systems of production at the international level, the castes of India have maintained the traditional economic dependence. Nomadic tribes are not excluded from this. In the whole world, apart from farmers, it is only the nomadic tribes who have preserved their economic origins. The reason for nomadic tribes preserving their economic origins like fossils is that in a traditional society such as India never has any major economic upheaval taken place. It is due to this reason that social inequality went on developing its most heinous dimensions. Therefore, in Indian society even nomadic tribes have been a part of this stratified society. The word "nomadic tribes" is not used in this essay to include such modern nomadic tribes who obtain degrees in higher education and roam America, Japan etc. for their

professions. Here, nomadic tribes are conceived as communities in the traditional society who, even in the 21st century, wander inevitably for one square meal and struggle to make ends meet everyday. Wandering is a condition that has formed a part of the unequal Indian society. We face the problem of clear evidence while we construct the transformations that take place in the economic life of nomadic tribes. The renowned scholar Dr Chidanandamurthy admits that there is a paucity of classical sources from which the history of the lives of nomadic tribes and the lower castes can be constructed2. One would encounter many problems if one tries to construct their histories using ancient inscriptions and literary works. However, we can make use of the myths of creation that the nomadic tribes themselves have conceived as alternative sources in order to construct the history of their economy. The nomadic tribes give a historical dimension to the economic activities practised by their castes through the myths of creation. Let us have a look at a couple of such examples.

The nomadic tribes have been constructing the myths of creation of their communities. It is strange that the birth of the originators of most of these nomadic tribes takes place due to a curse. The originator takes birth at a peculiar historical or mythical juncture. The originator of a community takes birth as a cursed person, and becomes responsible for the uplift of the community. The curse that they get thus represents their economic activities. Even in the romantic world of myths of creation, the economic activities of the nomadic tribes are recorded in a disadvantaged manner. In addition, since there is a relationship between the present condition of the nomadic tribes and origins of their birth as constructed by them in their myths of creation, we can examine a few myths of creation.

The Helavas, who are nomadic tribes, practised their profession of being Helavas in this manner: among the four siblings born into a family, the last one is a lame. While the three work, the lame one is helpless. Later, when they grow up, the three brothers take equal share of the property and do not give any property to the lame one. He gets just an ox. This man, who did not have legs, mounted the ox and went from house to house and begged to make a living. Later, his progeny identified itself as Helavas. Similarly, the Hakkipikkis say that the Marwadis, their

brothers, usurped their property and they had to migrate to the South and rely on hunting for their survival4. The Sudugaadu Siddhas get cursed that they shall lose their agricultural lands only in order to serve Lord Shiva. They are cursed by Goddess Parvati and are appointed specifically to serve Lord Shiva5. Those of the community named Kavalettinavaru say that they were destined to wander from place to place taking Nandi - who descended on the Earth to slay the demon Vyaghrasura - with them for the welfare of the world6.

Thus, the nomadic tribes, in their myths of creation, lose their economic resources due to the curse of someone. Or, they experience dependence on others in economic terms due to disability that comes right from birth. The nomadic tribes became so in order to serve someone, or for the welfare of the world.

Let us look at the economic sources of the nomadic tribes and the historical inevitabilities that caused them. The nomadic tribes have been classified into five categories:

1. Communities dependent on performing arts
2. Communities dependent on handicrafts
3. Communities practising vocations related to religion
4. Communities continuing in their traditional vocations
5. Communities which are still dependent on subsistence occupations such as hunting, animal rearing and food gathering Thus, nomadic tribes can be classified into five categories. There could be nomadic tribes in Karnataka who do not come within the framework of these categories. First, let us take a look at the communities which are dependent on performing arts.

1. Communities dependent on performing arts

   The people belonging to these communities try to entertain the public mostly by using their traditional paraphernalia. They do not have a fixed fee or rules that are found in modern entertainment media. Some open space beside a road is sufficient for Dombaratadavaru or for Jaatigaararu to show their acrobatics.

The spectator can pay as s/he wishes. One need not even pay. The communities that are dependent on these arts are Dombaru, Jaatigaararu, Killekyataru, Hagaluveshagaararu, Kavalettinavaru, Dombidaasaru, Kinnari Jogigalu, Bududubudike, Gondaligaru, Modikaararu etc.

2. Communities dependent on handicrafts

These are people who depend on their vocation being artisans from generation to generation. They use traditional production tools and make agricultural tools or domestic implements that are useful to villagers. Prominent among these communities are Bayalu Pattara, Bayalu Kammara, Medaru, Pinjaararu, Muddekammararu, Handijogigalu etc.

3. Communities practising vocations related to religion

These are people who belong to mystic sects. Besides, they worship the goddess of power (shakti). They wander from place to place singing Tattvapadagalu and the compositions of Dasaru and mystics. Among them, the prominent ones are Duruga Murugiyaru, Goravaru, Dombidaasaru, Sudugaadu Siddaru, Arjunajogigalu, Bhairaagigalu etc.

4. Communities that continue to practise traditional vocations

Communities belonging to this group are traditionally dependent on dominant communities which are economically strong in society. The major ones among them are Helavaru, Dakkalaru and Mondaru. They serve many feudal chieftains and landlords as "children of the household", and also record their genealogy by wandering from place to place.

5. Those who still follow subsistence vocations such as hunting, animal rearing and food gathering

Communities which belong to this group depend on hunting, animal rearing and food gathering even now. Adavi Chencharu, Yaanaadigalu and Hakkipikkigalu still rely on hunting. Nomadic

tribes Kurubas depend on animal rearing, Gosangigalu, Killekyaataru depend on inland fishing. Rajagondaru still depend on traditional medicine and 24 ManeTelugu Shettaru still live as wandering merchants.

We can closely examine this classification. Please observe the nomadic tribes communities and their economic sources listed above. Industrialisation, through its astonishing technology, has has handed over some of the vocations of nomadic tribes to the hands of capitalists. This is because, the artisans who do not have any economic power in an unequal society such as India did not have any opportunity to convert their traditional crafts into an industry. Modern industries adopted only the traditional skills, but abandoned the communities that had nurtured those skills. Further, the plight of communities dependent on performing arts is more worrisome. Modern media, with all its glamour, further marginalised these traditional performers. Traditional performing arts could not provide the exhilaration that modern media presents. Also, the feudal chieftains - who patronised Helavaru and Dakkalaru who practised their vocations being a part of the feudal system - gradually lost their capacity to provide for these communities. An important development was that communities such as Uchalya became prepared to give up their vocations that had stuck to them like a curse. How can communities which carry night soil, and hence remain as untouchables, continue to follow their original occupations? In all, communities here have been confronting the dilemma whether to retain their traditional economic sources or to give them up as circumstances change. Hence, nomadic tribes have been relying on the most uncertain economic sources throughout history.

## Travellers in a difficult path

Most of the communities which are called nomadic tribes did not have in their history immovable assets that brought them regular income. The nomadic tribes had to depend on productive communities in economic terms. They had no hereditary preparation to undertake India's traditional

occupation of agriculture and hence there was no possibility of them becoming farmers. They could not cultivate land that came to them through endowment. The Jaatigaararu, who separated from the Dombaru community, are wanderers and depend on acrobatics on the road side. They suffer from the same problem even today. Dombaru who converted to Islam at some phase have transformed into Jaatigaararu. They made adventure and acrobatics as their vocation. They did not become farmers even though they got land as charity. The economic system of the medieval times seems to have motivated them to continue in their original profession. They did not become farmers even though they got land. "The elders of Jaatigaararu say with great pride that many eminent elders of their caste got lands as gifts which can be found in Mantooru of Mudhol taluk, Saavalagi, Gothe, Gadyaala of Jamakhandi taluk and other places. It is a significant fact that most of the lands got through grants are found in Vijapura district. But most of such lands are not under their ownership now. Some of them were sold by them long ago. Some other lands have gone to farmers because none of the Jaatigaarau took to agriculture after getting lands. Besides, they have not permanently settled in those places. Jaatigaararu have got used to wandering from place to place displaying their skills and disguises"10. Therefore, even when such nomadic tribes got land, it could not become an economic resource for them. That apart, "The agricultural land given to those dependent on allied activities of agriculture and communities that entertained the people was left to the discretion of the local landlord. And, it was subjected to all the laws of ownership of land. Besides, the process of gifting was a part of the total productive activities of the village that was subjected to the laws. In cases where the landlord did not favour, the gifted land was given to others, or was annuled"11. The Zamindari system of the medieval times distorted the laws related to land during Mughal rule and controlled the lands and agricultural activities of farming communities. In this manner, even the land given as charity to such communities were subjected to many kinds of rules.

"Land used to be donated in two ways. One, landless communities which helped in the total agricultural production of a village were gifted land. Two, land was given as endowment. The endowment land was given

to priests and Mathas (religious institutions). Such land was called Inamu Bhoomi. However there are many differences between these two types of land grants. In the first kind, the donation of land to communities involved in agriculture-related activities, native doctors and those dependent on performing arts such as Dombaru was based on the process of traditionally "receiving and offering labour".[25] That is, such donation of land must be made to communities which involve in activities related to the entire village's production. But, the head of the village of the village bureaucracy donated these lands laying down some conditions. When the conditions were violated, the bureaucracy, naturally, had the right to confiscate the lands it had donated according to its conditions"12. These communities did not have the guarantee that they would get regular income from agricultural land they got as grants. Though these lands were apparently tax-free or revenue-less lands, it was only the local landlord class which enjoyed all the benefits from them. "The artisan communities and performing artist communities which obtained tax-free agricultural lands did not cultivate them. Instead, the entire village used to supervise the lands. During harvest, the artisans would be given a specified share in it. But there was no equality even among the dependent communities that got the share or income. They had to live under the mercy of the farmers of their village. Also, the chief of the village invariably belonged to the upper caste, and hence these people who belonged to the lower castes had to suffer oppression at the hands of the landlord constantly". When one sees the above citations, it is clear that these communities had to be dependent always. They could not be owners of lands though they got them. "There is no reference in any inscription or literary work in Karnataka that Holeyaru were land owners. Agriculture was prohibited to them as a profession". There is a direct connection between such prohibition and the Indian social laws mentioned in Hindu religious texts. Artisan communities and communities dependent on performing arts were always the marginal communities in the caste hierarchy. "They were allowed to build housed outside the village. And the agricultural lands that were given to them were not of superior quality. Besides, they had no ownership over such lands, and hence, farmers cultivated the lands and gave a specified quantity of grains as their share". It is for this reason that the economic condition

of artisans and communities dependent on performing arts cannot be viewed keeping it out of the traditional Indian social norms. "The landlord class obtained the service that these communities rendered to the village similar to the service rendered by contract labour"16. These communities could only get specified grants in return for their services. The above norm is in accordance with Hindu Karma theory which says that people who are at the bottom of the hierarchy are born only to serve those of the upper caste. The system of landlordism of the medieval times utilised evidences from tradition to justify itself. Therefore, "landlordism cannot be viewed by excluding the caste system. Landlordism is the inseparable part of Indian stratification"16. For this reason, the society dominated by landlords made it inevitable for these communities to be dependent economically.

Although Bhakti Movements and Social Reform Cults of the medieval times tried to empower such communities, they could not achieve considerable success. This was because these movements lacked the base of a clear political ideology. They glorified the poverty of low caste communities and advocated social equality. But these movements did not pay much attention to economics that would uplift their social status. The main aim of these movements was to bring reform in the existing system. These movements "did not condemn economic inequality in the same manner as they condemned social inequality. A trader, a Banajiga (a sect among Virasaivas who are merchants), an official or a king did not become the target of criticism, anger and wrath in the manner as the Brahmin was a target of these. The reason for this was the limitation of the framework of the movement of that time. Therefore, these movements only attempted to bring a kind of self identity to the lower castes and artisan communities, whereas bringing about economic equality was not the aim of these movements. Economic equality is achieved through struggle. But Bhakti movements tried to reform society in the most gentle manner. Hence, the lower castes and communities that were dependent economically on landlordism in the medieval era "had no opportunity to give up their traditional occupations in those times". Therefore there was no possibility for such communities to become economically autonomous during the medieval period in India. On the one hand, the status of being low caste was thrust upon them by their birth, and, on the other, the economic

dependence that came to them due to the same reason by which they depended on their vocations did not bring stability to these communities.

"Professional singers and communities dependent on performing arts had to rely feudalism and royalty for their survival. Such communities had to always expect charity and grants from them. The rich and the landlords called these artists during a few special occasions and made them sing and dance and enjoyed it. They rewarded the artists in return for this. In addition, villagers gave them Aaya (corn given as annual allowance) and patronised them. These communities had to look forward to such occasions in order to survive. Professional singers, those who wore disguises, gymnasts and acrobats survived by entertaining people around them. They got a bit of reward and endowments from the king or landlord. But, from the time land became an important economic resource these dependent 'unproductive' communities collapsed in economic terms. It also became inevitable for these communities to go in search of regular economic sources"[26]. Therefore, throughout the history of medieval India nomadic tribes lived as dependents and were considered as 'unproductive' groups in the entire society's production system. Their traditional occupations made them mandatorily economically dependent on the ruling class. They had to expect the grants, endowments or rewards given the ruling classes. Therefore it became inevitable for artisans and communities dependent on performing arts to migrate in search of regular economic sources during the medieval time in India. This was because, as we have already seen, the communities that have been listed as nomadic tribes have depended on a few unreliable economic grants given by the ruling class. These communities, which depended on endowments by kings and gifted lands, were shaken by the economic activities in India during the medieval era. Laws related to land framed during the Mughal rule deprived these communities of their traditional rights. In this regard, one can refer the writings of the famous historian Irfan Habib and the Russian writer Midavoy. "During the Moghul rule in the medieval period, especially in North India, when agriculture became an enterprise that determined the entire kingdom's revenue, agriculture gained special importance. Besides, more land came under agriculture". Also, laws related to agricultural land and agricultural revenue were framed. For the first time, land was

considered as private property by the zamindari system of the Mughals. Farmers were just lessees. Inam lands (lands gifted to nomadic tribes) was usurped by the zamindars (landlords). This was because, the lands belonging to communities that could not pay tax was acquired by the landlords. Such lands which were confiscated were mostly lands obtained traditionally as gifts from kings by artisans and communities dependent on performing artists. In this way, artisans and non-farming communities were given lands based on a few conditions. Hiroshi Pharajava, who has made an in-depth study of South Indian agriculture system of the medieval period, refers to three types of landholding. 'Mirasis' are hereditary landowners who own land permanently. 'Uperaru' are farmers. They are simple farmers who obtain land from the administration, cultivate it and pay a specified amount of tax. The third type of landholders are Inamdaararu. They obtained land from the administration either free of tax or by paying a small amount as tax. They too get agricultural land hereditarily. However, as Hiroshi records, such hereditary ownership of land is subjected to many conditions. The "Inamdaar"s are, mostly, artisans or those dependent on performing arts. It is common for them to migrate. Such communities are elusive for long periods of time. Hiroshi calls such communities as Extinct Families. "If a family which has the hereditary ownership of a piece of land and the right to use it is untraceable for a long time, then the Patela or the chief of the village is given the right to acquire it and make it his private property. Besides, the infertile land of the villatge and non-agricultural land too was brought under the control of the village chief by the government of those times". Due to all these reasons, the non-agricultural communities had no legal right over land that came to them as grants. Furthermore, during the rule of the East India Company, when agrarian relations were subjected to stricter laws, for the first time the regular income of these communities was affected. They were left with only their traditional occupations. The above mentioned communities had no other alternative but to depend on their traditional occupations. Hence they had no other alternative than being nomadic tribes.

After the Mughal rule, during the colonial rule, laws related to land and land revenue became much tougher. This was because the British came to India to plunder its diverse natural resources and they confiscated

the land belonging to tribals and non-agricultural communities through violent means. Warren Hastings, in 1793, made many amendments to the laws related to land of the Mughals and brought them into vogue. A.I.Midavoy who specifically studied India's economic condition during the colonial rule had the following to say:

"The 'Permanent Landholding' law that came into existence in 1793 was implemented strictly n North India. According to this law, lands belonging communities that were dependent on handicrafts and performing arts which obtained land as grants and had traditional rights over them came under the control of landlords and revenue collectors permanently. This is a law which had typical feudal features brought by the British in order to fill their coffers easily with land revenue that the Company had to get. Due to this, many communities in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh had to migrate to the South. Besides, the industries that entered North India suddenly made it inevitable for communities rely on handicrafts to migrate".

## The Impulse to Create a New Society and New Man

The autobiographical narratives of nomadic tribes contain many aspects that are opposed to feudalism and construct alternatives; highlighted among them is the major intention of overpowering feudalism. If king and queen are featured prominently in feudalism, in many narratives of the Kadugolla tribe cultural leaders who enlighten society like mystical saints who have a blanket on their shoulder and herd cattle and protect nature figure prominently.

The intention found in all these narratives at the poetic level is to ensure co-existence, and a search for a 'New Man' who is free from the disease of feudalism and one who is free from prejudice and shapes dreams that carry the most human concerns. That is, this new man is one who is free from all the qualities of the feudal man. Men with great and natural a personality such as Gadripaaalanaayaka, Jagaloorajja, Narayana Kavi of Kaiwara, Beriki Butteppa, Maadeshwara, Manteswamy take birth.

Nomadic tribals are those who reject the influence of time unconsciously, transcend all frameworks of historical analyses and live in

the lap of nature. If one begins to study the cultural and historical relationships of nomadic tribesin order to analyse their lives, one finds that their social relationships are very thin. The social relationship is an organic relationship that is based on the family and the community. One cannot view nomadic tribesthrough structural aspects as one does with all categories of mainstream life. They are scattered groups who have not been able to form social relationships over a long period of time.

All studies in social sciences, and literature in India, are withering under the weight of Western logic. Western epistemology has besieged all of our epistemologies and our opinions and thought processes have been influenced by Western thought. But the consciousness shaped by colonial thought can be liberated by the life, thought and consciousness of the tribes. Ganesh Devi of the Adivasi Academy who studies tribes says, "A proper understanding of the tribal imagination adds to our literature and art. Indian literature has been burdened for the last two centuries by the perspective imagination of Western origin. Because our systems of knowledge have been more or less replaced by Western systems, the tribal is now the only Indian unaffected by colonial consciousness".

Most of the cultures of the world have followed the course of the oral tradition which gives expression to the essence of their community through various forms that are unique to them such as song, narration and performing arts. Such expressions have given voice to their collective consciousness and thereby given rise to their own languages and have also caused the growth of the history of language. As the size of the group increased, their knowledge increased and the community's literary theory and tribal studies also developed. The creation myths, ballads, folk epic poems, traditional songs and dance of communities come under the purview of these forms of expression. Nomads are seen as not needed by the minds which shape the ruling establishment and reap the benefits of civilisation, just going by their physical contours and humility. This is a major form of mockery and neglect. As Thomas Carlyle says, "The nomad has his very house set on wheels: the nomad and in still degree the Ape, are all for liberty. The privilege to flit continuously is indispensible to them... The civilised man lives not in wheeled houses, hebuilds stone

castles, plants lands, makes lifelong marriage contracts, has long dated hundred fold possessions, not to be valued in the money market; has pedigrees, libraries, law codes; has memories and hopes, even for this earth, that reach over thousands of years"

In course of time, primitive natives came out of the forest and moved to the cities and faced all kinds of assaults, and were weakened; they did not return to the forest but kept crawling to the cities and became wanderers and were reduced to a pitiable condition. They entrenched themselves in a shell and the refrains they sing have become metaphors for their existence. It is not an exaggeration that these indigenous narratives were composed in the form of cultural poetic works and they were extended to form epics. They considered Kumaararaama, Sharabandaraaja, Desingaraja, Gadripaalanaayaka and many other cultural figures as part of their community and provided folk poetic touches to their stories. These have become the metaphors of tribal discourse and developed into a tradition of oral poetry and carried on like the life-affirming river of these communities. These forms of poetry were later called under various categories as narratives, poems, plays and epic poems influenced by colonial consciousness. Thus, the poems composed by tribals comprehended the themes of their times through texts that were indicative of the times or through popular texts and manifested them. As they expanded, they confronted classical poetry and cultural texts at the most human level and established their own unique thought and values as alternatives to those texts and engaged with them. These works, at a later stage, stress the need to rethink conventional cultural thoughts in a manner conducive to regional narratives. For example, one can recall the indigenous traditions that arose or were formed as alternatives when 'The Ramayana' and 'The Mahabharatha' were subjected to a comparative study. In reality, in all places where the neglected lives of the tribals exist, the mainstream cultural texts have been negotiated in a different manner and alternative poetry to them has been evolved.

Forces close to the State and the ruling classes which derive the benefits of the social system have rejected the arts of the downtrodden communities through conspiracy and have formed a stratified system and

perpetuated it. The institutions of the social elite classes refined them into classical literature, classical tradition and classical culture in the modern context. It is in the modern context that serious discussion about the world of art and the culture of tribals was started. Though many branches of knowledge, including Indian theory of poetics, and various discourses developed extensively, and even when the attention of the academic arena turned towards them and tribal studies began, there has been no substantial thought of international standards about them. Comparative studies took birth in many countries of the West as part of the curiosity of seeing the replicas of their culture. They must have had the intention of finding out how their tradition and culture were different from the indigenous communities. Even when comparative studies were undertaken for mere academic purposes, the comprehensive thought of the poetry of nomadic tribes tribes did not take a rebirth. The nomads, who have no notion of borders or languages, are experiencing a state of helplessness in the situation in which they exist. The caste hierarchy of India has tragically shattered the dreams, aspirations and imaginations of nomads and Dalits. They isolated the esoteric mythology, history, politics of the society and cultural struggles and social narratives.

These communities faced the repercussions of post-colonial times. It is surprising that such a human consciousness, which is isolated, is negotiating with nature more and more and has not exploded against the establishment even today. Even when these aspects are mentioned in passing, ultimately the nomadic tribes and their autobiographies must be subjected to thorough discussion. This is an aspect that has to analysed from the perspective of social justice. Actually even now nomadic tribes tribes have been misreperesented, documented and sidelined in representative classifications. It is quite natural that in the anthropological and sociological studies conducted by scholars of the colonial times such as Thurston and later K.S.Singh, there is no proper information about nomadic tribes tribes. But the same historical mistakes are being repeated in studies of nomadic tribes tribes conducted all over the country based on them. Though these appear as contextual limitations, their implications affect the nomadic tribesat various levels. From this perspective we come to know that government departments make use of the studies of colonial

scholars for the sake of information. It is surprising that one can find spurious amendments made out of compulsions and a bureaucracy that cannot read in-depth studies about them.

"Castes in India are production units that were formed based on the division of labour. These castes have a sentimental attachment to the emblems of their customs and have protected them. Differentiation is a natural consequence of caste". Every caste understood its occupation and became the colorful thread of the hierarchical system. Here, while some gained higher status in the stratified system, others have performed inevitably the occupations heaped on them and remained silent. Even though vast changes have taken place in production relations at the international level, the traditional economic dependence in the Indian caste system has not disappeared. The communities at the lower rungs who are dependent on the upper castes could not undergo crucial changes in a stratified social order. There was no economic revolution in the lives of nomadic tribeson the lines of the impact of Western Socialism. The nomadic tribeshave preserved their traditional economic sources.

These communities relied upon performing arts utilising the things they had with them. A person belonging to the Sudugaadu Siddha community conjures tricks out of things found in his shoulder bag such as cowrie shells, a ball of stone, a symbol of Lord Shiva made out of stone, the hollow shell of bottle gourd and sacred ash. He says that he lives in the graveyard comes to beg as the son of Shiva. Actually, no person of the Sudugaadu Sidda community lives in a graveyard. They live in much worse conditions in tents pitched on open grounds. But they stand outside society and seed alms on the basis of such religious reasons. The nomadic Budgajangama community is basically none other than Sudugaadu Siddharu. The people of the same community are called by different names in different regions and hence they are recognised in different ways. Though the charm, language and culture of both of them are the same, their vocations are different. The members of the Budgajangama tribe carry out their profession wearing costumes such as a wandering mendicant, an ascetic, Hagaluvesha, Burrakatha, Kondaraja, Kondamama, Kurramama and Balasanta. But Sudugaadu Siddaru perform conjuring and

fortunetelling. Apart from these, there are nomadic tribes communities dependent on performing arts such as Shillekyaataru who perform leather puppetry, Dombaru who display acrobatics, Dombidaasaru who sing musical compositions, philosophical verses and devotional songs at day time, Jogis who play a kind of lute, Gondaligaru who play a small drum. Some of them have practised vocations related to handicrafts from generations. Hakkipikki, Bailupattara, Ghisaadi and Shikkaligaararu are communities which make armlets, Hallukaddi, Kimata, tongs and models of animals and birds at fairs and colonies.

Singers belonging to nomadic communities took the literature of mystic saints who lived in various parts of Karnataka to the homes of people. For example, the members of Budgajangama community sing the philosophical verses of Kaivarataata in Kolar, Chikkaballapura, Bangalore rural and the border areas of Tumkur. In fact, Communities such as Sindhollu(Durugamurugi), Sudugaadu Siddharu, Dombidaa saru, Gondaligaru, Gosangigalu are chiefly dependent on seeking alms using religious causes.

Among the nomads, even though there are fundamental changes in their traditional vocations, the same tribes have been practising a few distinct occupations. The genealogy narrated by Helavaru is not followed by any other community. The acrobatic manoeuvres of the art form called Dombaraata are performed only by the Dombaru. The Madaari who charm snakes, Khalandar who tame bears, Pinjaararu who make beds, Daravesigalu who live as Sufi mystics continue to follow their traditional occupations.

Lambani, Gisaadi, Bailupattara communities migrated to the South due to the political upheavals during the Mughal rule. It is due to this reason one can find many studies that classify nomadic tribes tribes as tribes of primitive origin, tribes formed in course of history and tribes formed due to social and political upheavals. Communities such as Sudugaadu Siddha, Dakkaliga, Dombaru and Channadasar are culturally alike. These are tribes that sprouted from the same source. This aspect has been analysed in the studies on creation myths of Maadiga community. Most importantly, this has been made clear in the creation myths of

Dakkaligaru. Similarly, there is similarity between Shikkekyaataru, Gondali, Gosangi, Gosaayi, Pardhi and Hakkipikki in terms of language. Gondaru who were the ruling landowning class belonging to Gondaavana and their royal physicians called Rajagondaru turned into nomads due to political upheavals. The royal physicians of the Gondaru have become destitute and they carry herbs and native medicines al over the country.

These nomadic tribes who have been denied social, economic, political and educational rights are regarded as sub-cultures by some and this has been questioned. The cultural politics that questions and divides the original inhabitants of the country has been criticised. Instead of saying that a dominant culture creates a subordinate culture, it would be right to say that the parasites connected with an exploitative lineage have established domination.

The nomadic tribes tribes have been unscientifically classified for significant measure of social justice such as reservation in independent India. Many nomadic tribes tribes have been included in the list of scheduled castes instead of being included among scheduled tribes. Even when the names of communities are found in the list published by the government, their surnames have been filled in with confusion.

Under such circumstances, it is more significant to undertake 'cultural studies' of the nomadic tribes tribes rather than sociological studies. It would not mean the rejection of the parameters of sociology. They are minor instruments for the rule of the establishment. There are many narratives composed and expressed by nomadic tribesin the course of a long period of time. The oral tradition is the life-affirming river to these communities that are deprived of literacy in the history that accords prominence to literacy. There are communities which have been singing folk compositions (repartees or "Kelike") and poems for several generations. Many shifts have taken place during the course of this process. These communities which are primordial must have formed a cultural centre of liberation for all the actual crises facing them. Therefore such a research demands the study of the mode of expressing internal forms of knowledge such as art and literature and the modes of negotiating real social struggles in cultural terms. So there has been attempt to look at all

aspects of the comprehensive poetics of these tribal communities among which one can find creation myths, repartee ("Kelike"), folk poems, traditional songs, riddles and even written texts. One must know the holistic consciousness of these communities through all these forms. This encounter with the indigenous communities has been viewed as the study of autobiographical narratives.

Kotaganahalli Ramaiah rejects the term subculture used for nomadic tribesin his work "A Study of Sind Maadigaru" and uses the term *Moolasamskriti* (original culture). He says, "It is as good as endorsing the intent of the aggressive culture if nomadic tribes tribes are referred to as a subculture"81. If the word "sub" is accepted, it implies that the hegemony of the word "main" is accepted, and the lives of these tribes who live away from civilisation is declared as subcultures. Rahamat Tarikere opines that, "Some people object to the method of viewing a culture by classifying it into dominant and subordinate elements. The dominant and the subordinate in a culture are relative and time-bound features and not perennial ones. It is a more useful method to view culture as a finished product and to comprehend it from within. The question that arises here is whether the notions of 'subordinate' and 'main' are states that we perceive from outside or are they those that exist in society? Just as classifications such as 'low', 'sub' are accepted, accepting the term 'subordinate' would mean conceding that there is something that is dominant"[82]

Writers from Africa such as N'gugi Von Thiango and Chinua Achebe return to the languages of their motherland in order to free themselves from the clutches of of colonialism. Even now, those who are systematically bound by the chains of globalisation, while turning to indigenous studies should regard studies of tribes and their cultural expressions as nothing but autobiographical narratives.

"When an individual is born in a society, the relationship between the individual and society gives rise to many discussions. While composing a work, a writer documents many issues. Thus there has to be many kinds of relative relationships between between events that have occurred and an individual. An individual cannot be creative on one's own. The society plays a major role in creating a conducive environment to develop one's

creativity. The sense one gets when an individual imagines a society without her/his existence is the same as that obtained when the 'self' exists without the society, and it is analysed accordingly. When life in Malnad region during the period of time in which Kuvempu did not exist and Kuvempu's creativity without Malnad are analysed, cultural aspects and technical reasons face one another"83. Many aspects of the work composed by an individual do not engender friction consciously. Many aspects documented by the author are those obtained from society. The individual is deeply dependent on the society. In Chinua Achebe's novel "Things Fall Apart", Okonko who emerges as the leader of the Igbo tribe having great self respect becomes the tragic hero due to the moral injunctions of his own tribe. His moral inner self collapses after he kills Ikemefuna who is innocent. Macbeth kills the old king Duncan on the full moon night after he is given a ceremonial reception at the palace upon his victory in the war. Thus the tragedy of Macbeth begins from the act of killing. But a capitalist who does not have a moral consciousness and a goon who relies on muscle power do not feel so. The question of considering African literature under a particular literary category is one which is more relevant to a critic and not to a sensitive reader. It is immaterial whether "Things Fall Apart" is regarded as a work of poetry, a story or, beyond all these, the autobiography of a Black tribal individual. Autobiography is community-centric rather than centred around an individual. It is indeed the collective creative negotiation of the entire range surrounding the central point in a collective consciousness. Just as the indigenous folk songs are swept away in the flood of colonialism, Chinua Achebe says symbolically that Okonko is severed from his tribe and becomes merely the footnote of the lines of history in his novel "Things Fall Apart". All conscientious individuals of the Igbo tribe which suffered under the dark clouds of colonialism and major critics of Nigerian literature regard this novel as their own 'autobiography'.

Devanooru Mahadeva's work "Kusumabaale" is regarded as the autobiography of the Dalit community. In the same vein, "Ooru-keri", "Government Brahamana", "Manegaara", "Samboli" and other such narratives are the autobiographies of Dalits. An individual, simultaneously does not get ruined under the shadow of the establishment and expresses

ideological opinions and endorses one's stance. Okonko kills Ikemefuna, the tribal boy who was innocent and like his own son and speaks to his tribe justifying this action. But, within him, he experiences sorrow, regret and feels completely ruined. Works like "Things Fall Apart" and "The Arrow" reveal such contradictory relationships. The cultural texts - composed by the talented people belonging to tribes who surpass the limitation of literacy - are also the tales of sorrow of the depressed communities. These are not just insensitive writings that are meant to entertain. The reason for this is that the pressures of the respective times do not allow them to remain neutral. They face challenges that swim in the furnace of the contemporary times. "A literary work presents the writer's artistry and vision and also renders the pressures of life of the writer in its uniqueness"86. Therefore the folk poetry, repartees ("Kelike") and traditional songs of nomadic tribesare regarded as autobiographical expressions. The Russian writer Maxim Gorky perceives his autobiographies "My Childhood", "My University", "Among the People" at a collective level. It is not subjected to the limits of individuality, but is the narrative of the collective social life. If Gorky had not perceived such a worldview, such contradictory relationships would not have formed. When an individual is part of a collective consciousness, he/she becomes transcendental. In other words, the person is a visionary with a spiritual consciousness and becomes humane. There is the danger of this being regarded as pseudo nationalism or pseudo martyrdom. When folk artists such as Burrakatha Eramma and Gamgaaraamayya of Kirigambi village of Kolar district sing folk poetry, it appears that these works give solutions to many contemporary problems. When Eramma sings "Syaasi Channama's" poem she gives a colourful description of many discrete details, and also mentions the poignancy of the social justice connected with her tribe. Many contemporary issues resolve their sorrows in the spiritual vision of the organic relationship that is linked with nature. There are many works of talented writers in Kannada who negotiate several contemporary issues through myths. Kuvempu, in his play "Beralge Koral" exposes the injustice that Ekalavya faced and the cultural politics of Brahminism and its cruel effects. He relates this with the characters from his works such as Shambuka, Manthare and Urmile. Great writers with

social commitment compose ideological and cultural texts. This reminds us of the theme-based debates that have taken place at various stages of the Kannada literary tradition. The wisdom of tradition has increased due to these debates.

One can analyse many oral epic poems composed and sung by creative individuals belonging to nomadic tribes communities. The song sung by the artist of the Sindollu nomadic tribes tribe while he whips his bare body evokes new meanings and invites one to interpret it new ways. The song of Kondamaama who has a peacock's feather tucked in his tuft, and comes along singing in the valley of a remote village is an autobiographical text. One is reminded of the nomadic Budgajangama artists who give performances of their art in villages as they wander from place to place on every night. In compositions ("Kelike") which they perform such as "Balanagamma Charitre", "Syaasi Channamma", "Sharabandaraja", "Desingaraja", "Marwadi Sheth", "The Story of Krishnagolla", "Nallatanga" and "Halli Arjuna", the artists abundantly give a cultural exposition about their communitarian life. The leather puppetry of Shillekyaataru - who enacts the work "Krishnapaarijaata" - goes beyond the classical text and the indigenous literature and artistic details presented therein are nothing but the narratives of the community.

While focusing on the autobiographies of nomadic tribes tribes, those belong to South India have been studied. The nomadic tribes tribes, especially in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, are being documented through their autobiographies. The nomadic tribeswho are not restricted by language and borders are scattered all over the country likeanthills. Though they speak the language of the region, they understand several secrets through the community's distinct language. This is true of tribes of Dravidian origin such as Budgajangama, Sudugaadu Sidda, Dombidasaru, Dombaru, and those connected with Marathi language such as Gondali, Shillekyaata, Lambaani and Ghisaadi. In the current study, a social connection has been established between all nomadic tribes tribes of Karnataka for the sake of the struggle for social justice. It has been possible to connect with writers belonging to the nomadic tribes tribes of South India due to the experience gained in mobilising nomadic tribes

communities and by attending various conferences and programmes in states such as Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

The social problems of all nomadic tribesare easily understood by activists due to the effect of this contemplation and the singularity of common problems. The nomadic tribeshave been understood here through the historical approach by studies that were conducted during the colonial rule and the post-colonial period, and their natures have also have been understood. The significance of the study has been gained by methods such as observation, interview, history, comparative studies and analysis. The series of studies on subcultures and the series of studies on nomadic tribesas well as researches on nomadic tribes tribes documented in various universities have been helpful. The writings of A.S. Prabhakar on nomadic Domba community have aided in rationally analysing the autobiographies of nomadic tribes. Along with these, the autobiographies of selected writers of nomadic tribes communities which were brought out in various contexts have been studied. Conversations have been held with these writers and the many theoretical aspects discussed in the process have been explained as collaborative work. While discussing autobiographies with Lakshman Gaikwad and Sharankumar Limbale some of the extremities and negotiations of the individual and the community emerged that are conducive to the solutions that the tribes aspire for. Many anthropologists, writers, leaders and activists who have involved themselves in struggles related to the lives of nomadic tribes have been interviewed.

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# CONCLUSION

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Many marginalized communities that have been traumatized by feudalistic control and caste-hierarchy have been struggling hard to rebuild their lives. Dalits and other minority communities have been successful to some extent in creating a sense of social activism. It does not imply that they are prospering. But they at least have the political awareness to protect their constitutional rights. Complementing this mindfulness is the added power of their strength in numbers, political representation, literary and cultural expressions that have provided them with an ability to question authority. But nomadic communities have not had the opportunity to participate in any of these advantages and continue to live on the social periphery. What with a spurt of political regulations, the ruling class did not attempt to understand the predicament of the grass-roots communities. On the other hand, it mercilessly pushed aside the traditional occupations of the nomads and imposed restrictions on them.

As per the laws concerning forests and wild animals, the traditional occupations of people like snake-charmers and bear-baiters are considered illegal and they have become destitutes as they lack the dexterity to learn another trade. Communities like the Giranivaddas, Ucchalyagantichoras, Lambanis and Koramas have been instrumental in erecting countless dams and bunds for rivers. But in the context of modern development projects they have been displaced. Certain nomadic groups that brew toddy from herbs have been prohibited from following their occupation. The neglected or abandoned communities that are denied the circumstances to live productive lives embrace their cultural displays such as, Burrakatha, Hagaluvesha, Modiaata, Kelike and wrestling and make them socially acceptable. But such folk-artistes are deemed beggars and sent to beggar colonies. The performers, thus imprisoned, lose their link with their cultural

roots. Consequently, a cultural tradition is forced to commit suicide. In such a social environment, nomadic communities are crawling along, speaking with weeping eyes anguished hearts. This is manifested as historical expression to some extent.

## Findings of the Research

For many centuries now, these communities have been exploited by the hierarchical influence of culture. It started with the Criminal Tribes Act 1871 during British colonization and the ignominy of this stigma has continued into the social behavior of modern India. The abuse mainly takes the form of torture, control and neglect.

Nomads, denied education, have vented their grief and opposition through cultural channels. Their creative output predominantly in the form of narratives like folk-epics, Kelike-songs, local lavanis or ballads, creation myths stress the inequality prevalent in the multifaceted aspect of a large country like India since time immemorial. While communities originally engaged in hunting, agriculture and trading have flourished through subsequent stages of development to become active in politics, set against them is the plight of the cursed marginalized communities that can barely survive even in the present day. For these reason, a dissenting voice is visible in some of their oral collections. This aspect is obvious in many of the compositions that Eeramma has sung. Criticizing those in authority, teaching the ruler what life is all about, she humanizes an authoritarian mindset. Through her poems she proffers the light of humanity. She gives Kambojiraja commonplace worldly wisdom, *"Come out of your seat of authority and toil like a labourer until you sweat; plant seedlings and enliven the environment."* Kambojiraja loses his pride for the partial control he has over his assets during colonial rule. He removes his mask of superiority, descends from his status and as a human being learns the dignity of honest labour. Eeramma demonstrates that it is only through the dissemination of such thoughts that social equality can be set up. In Kumararama's poem, Eeramma changes the very way of viewing the character of Rathnaaji. Questioning the existing ethical system and constructing an opposing set of values, she exposes patriarchy to ridicule. And for this reason she

provides Rathnaaji the grace of rebirth. The viewpoint from which nomadic writing investigates centuries of exploitation, abuse and control practiced on the grassroots communities in the name of a questionable value system makes it the literature of resistance. Just as silence could be eloquent, there is a vociferous voice of protest in oral literature.

The ultimate benefit of their sense of self-worth was that they documented their folk stories as protest literature. Of the nomads almost all over the country, the Sindhollu clan is one community that is in abject poverty. And it exhibits its protest against its situation through its current art-forms. The people of this community whip themselves while begging on the streets to show that they are self-inflicting a punishment that should be meted out to the perpetrators of a historical caste hierarchy that has continued to keep then destitute in a supposedly civilized system. Also, the Sindhollu pujaris describe the goddesses of the town in a deprecatory manner as an act of protest by the whole community. Such dissidence will instill fear in the control imposed by the priestly class and bring in cultural awareness. The Budgajangamas too display such resistance in their day-long costume shows of story-recital. Just as the characters in some of Kuvempu's works agitate for social justice and condemn Vedic control, nomads too reinterpret certain puranic myths as current social problems. They introduce protest in episodes concerning the folk-goddess, Ardhanarishwara and Hanumantha in Lanka.

Though some of the nomadic folk artistes who sing from their oral repertoire beat time with their feet to the values embedded in the songs, they are also conscientious enough to make their songs throb with pain for the intolerance and helplessness of their present situation. Their creation myths are the best examples of this kind of deconstruction. Every creation story depicts dissidence against Vedic and colonial control in graphic visual imagery. The creation myths of nomadic people like Dakkaligas, Gosangis, Sudugaadusidhas, Budgajangamas and Dombaras are epigrams expressing the cultural values of local grassroots communities untouched by Vedic myths. Though the format of these stories is mythic on the surface, historically they are in reality a cultural expression of social protest from these communities.

The first generation literates from among the Dalits, particularly the nomadic depressed classes, have resorted to writing their life-stories. The order and intention in these written documents demonstrate a similar commitment to a pre-occupation with protest as their repository of oral literature. Autobiographies like Ucchalya, Akramasanthaana, Gabbaala, Bayalu Benneri, Alamari Antharanga, Gondhaligya ooze with community grief.

The mass movement of the Dalit Panthers of Maharashtra and the agitations arising out of Dr. Ambedkar's Dalit consciousness gave an impetus to the writing of such autobiographies. Dalit protests created a new trend of thought across the length and breadth of the country and, naturally, made a tremendous impact on nomadic communities. As a result, they established organizations representing each community. They also learnt to define their protest against their unstable identity. Through their life-stories, they gave voice to the silence of their communities regarding the truth of their situation throughout history. Nomadic autobiographies have become a kind of an affidavit before the ethical courts of the human community to show how the cruelty of the caste system has destroyed the common social virtues of humanity and togetherness.

Dalit and Nomadic life-stories have exposed autobiographies by Western writers to new commentaries. The genre has moved from being a person-centered journal to become the united voice of the community. In this manner, the grief of falsehood, illusion and excellence of the orphaned communities was destroyed as the voice of the narrator spoke the truth about their situation. (?) The unseemliness of life and social system among the criminal tribes described in *Uchhalya* shocked Indian society.

The united investigations of the dual traditions of nomadic writing, oral and written, have created an awareness of their uniqueness. Traditional writings rarely provide such a social watchfulness. As a result of such visibility, Sociology has been able to provide elaborate discussions and debates on abstract frontiers of differences that exist among them.

Every detail of documented and critical material on the Dalits and Nomads in regional literatures from all over the country, in general, and

in Dravidian literatures in particular, have been exposed to research. Such investigations have been mainly instrumental in studying up-close material about the ignored communities written by others and by them. There have been attempts to critically study at different levels the autobiographies that give voice and description to the lives of the ignored who have been pushed to the periphery due to the caste system in Indian society. More importantly, the silent anger of the writers and its cause is being investigated in topical essays.

The purpose of these essays is to study the frequency of the theme of hunger in the life-stories of nomads; to understand if the poverty prevalent in all the communities is the predominant cause or if there were other causes that lent themselves to a discussion of ethics.

The most important purpose of the research is to study the profundity of the written material that describe as casual information the plight of communities that are writhing as if they are caught in the vice-grip of a hungry python and the clever silence of the cruel social system that is responsible for the situation. This kind of research is beyond certain aspects of nomadic life studied under sociological perspectives; it is an investigation concerning the nomads themselves.

Such writings intend to study and understand every issue that concerns nomadic communities – untouchability, religious conversion, communalism, sexual exploitation, occupation and financial condition, system of justice, creativity, education, awareness and unity, religion, god, superstition, social, economic and cultural problems. They explain the way autobiographers respond to these issues.

In the autobiographies studied here, there is no violent protest. The negative aspects of violence breeding destruction can be seen in the context of colonial writing. The basis of change documented here tends towards a co-existence it does not wish for the evils of disruption. Hence the anger and hope expressed in the autobiographies are constructive forms of protest.

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